DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 283 032 CE 047 505

AUTHOR	Lah, David; And Others
TITLE	Youth Corps Profiles: The Young Adult Conservation Corps. The Wisconsin Conservation Corps. The Michigan Civilian Conservation Corps. The Texas Conservation Corps.
INSTITUTION	Public/Private Ventures, Philadelphia, PA.
PUB DATE	Dec 86
NOTE	150p.; For related documents, see CE 047 498 and CE 047 502-508.
AVAILABLE FROM	Public/Private Ventures, 399 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Case Studies; Conservation (Environment); *Conservation Education; Demonstration Programs; Federal Programs; *Outcomes of Education; Postsecondary Education; *Program Content; Program Costs; *Program Effectiveness; State Programs; Student Characteristics; *Youth Employment; *Youth Programs
IDENTIFIERS	Michigan; Texas; Wisconsin; Young Adult Conservation Corps; *Youth Conservation Corps

ABSTRACT

The Young Adult Conservation Corps (YACC) was one of two federally funded youth conservation corps programs that existed prior to 1981. The other program, the Youth Conservation Corps, was a summer program, whereas the YACC operated on a year-round basis. In operation between 1977 and 1982, the YACC received funds of approximately $232 million each year, and at its peak it maintained roughly 25,000 slots for youths between the ages of 16 and 23. The program was open to youths from all educational and economic backgrounds and was intended primarily to complete backlogs of high-priority work that had been identified by state and federal natural resource departments. Although the YACC was not renewed under the Reagan administration, it left a legacy of experienced youth corps advocates and program operators and a number of state programs patterned after its model. The other three programs profiled in this report--the Wisconsin, Michigan, and Texas youth conservation corps programs--all derive from the YACC model filtered through the experiences of the California Conservation Corps. There are, however, some major differences between the three programs with respect to goals, targeting, administration, funding, private sector participation, nature of sites and enrollment, youth development, and job placements. (MN)

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Youth Corps Profiles:

The Young Adult Conservation Corps

The Wisconsin Conservation Corps

The Michigan Civilian Conservation Corps

The Texas Conservation Corps

December 1986

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is part of the Youth Corps Assessment Project, made possible through the generous support of The Ford Foundation. The project includes studies of the youth conservation and service corps in the states of California, Michigan, Texas and Wisconsin; in the cities of New York and San Francisco; the national program in Canada; and the former U.S. Young Adult Conservation Corps. A case study of the corps in Marin County, California, funded by The San Francisco Foundation, is also included in this series. The Youth Corps Assessment Project will also produce a major analytic report, based on the findings of these individual program assessments, that addresses critical issues in the field.

The authors wish to thank the staff, corpsmembers, boards of directors and work sponsors of the Michigan Civilian Conservation Corps, the Wisconsin Conservation Corps and the Texas Conservation Corps, and the former sponsors, administrators and staff members of the Young Adult Conservation Corps for their candor, reflection and gracious hospitality during the preparation of these profiles.

Many staff at Public/Private Ventures assisted in the preparation of these profiles, which were prepared under the direction of Wendy Wolf and Alvia Branch. We would especially like to acknowledge the contributions of Natalie Jaffe and Judy White who edited these reports; Charlotte Thurmond, Paula Strawberry and Christine Jeter who produced numerous drafts as well as the final versions that appear here; and Rick Etheredge, the programmer who assisted in the collection and analysis of data.

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OVERVIEW

With the support of The Ford Foundation, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, The San Francisco Foundation and the State of California, Public/Private Ventures has been conducting an assessment of youth conservation and service corps programs. These corps count three federal programs among their historical antecedents -- the Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps, the Youth Conservation Corps and the Young Adult Conservation Corps. Today's state and local programs have three goals: productive work and service to communities, the development of youth employability, and the transmission of values that emphasize service and teamwork..

Corpsmembers work, typically, on backlog projects for public and non-profit agencies. Participants receive preparation for the adult world through a combination of work experience, efforts to promote personal growth, and (with increasing frequency) program elements that address educational needs.

Most of these programs have not targeted particular groups, that is, they are open to youth without regard to economic or educational background. The interaction between youth from different walks of life is considered integral to the transmission of social values that prepare youth to participate in a diverse society. Open enrollment has also been considered critical to developing a broad base of support and avoiding the stigma often associated with poverty programs.

P/PV's assessment of these programs includes analyses, case studies and profiles of nine youth conservation and service corps programs that have operated in the United States and Canada, as follows:

- **A comprehensive evaluation of the California Conservation Corps (CCC)**, the oldest, largest and widely perceived to be the strongest of all current year-round youth conservation corps. The CCC has served as a point of departure for most of the existing state and local corps programs. Included in the evaluation of this program are a report on implementation, an analysis of participant characteristics and attrition experiences, a study of the value of the work completed by the corps, and an impact analysis that compares economic and non-economic outcomes for participants with those of a comparison group.

- **A series of case studies** of four additional youth corps programs -- the Marin Conservation Corps in Marin County, California; the San Francisco Conservation Corps; the City Volunteer Corps of New York City; and Katimavik, the Canadian national service program.

- **Four profiles** -- brief descriptions of the state youth conservation programs in Wisconsin, Michigan and Texas, and of the former federal Young Adult Conservation Corps (YACC) upon which several state corps were modeled. These profiles are the subject of this volume.

- **An analytic report**, based on the findings of all the program assessments, that will synthesize findings across all sites and attempt to answer some of the critical questions in this field.

This document presents brief descriptions of the Young Adult Conservation Corps (YACC), the Wisconsin Conservation Corps (WCC), the Michigan Civilian Conservation Corps (MCCC) and the Texas Conservation Corps (TCC), the latter three as they were during late 1985 and early 1986.

These profiles are based on a limited amount of field work -- less than was possible for full case studies. In the case of the Wisconsin, Michigan and Texas corps programs, a total of six days of site observations and interviews, and several weeks of reviewing program documents and verifying information went into the completion of each profile. In the case of YACC, no program observations were possible. Its profile is based upon interviews with individuals who provided retrospective accounts of the program while it was in operation and a review of available documentary materials.

THE FEDERAL PROGRAM

With the exception of the California Conservation Corps, and a few small programs, youth conservation corps in the U.S. prior to 1981 were funded by the federal government. The two federal programs were the Youth Conservation Corps, a summer program, and the year-round YACC, a profile of which is presented in this volume.

In operation between 1977 and 1982, and funded at roughly $230 million a year, the YACC was jointly administered by the Departments of Labor and Interior and the states. At its peak, it maintained a capacity of roughly 25,000 slots for young men and women between the ages of 16 and 23, providing them with useful work experience and completing backlogs of high-priority work

that had been identified by federal and state natural resource departments.

About three-quarters of the YACC sites were non-residential; all of its projects were sponsored by natural resources agencies. To qualify for enrollment, participants had to be out of school and unemployed at the time of application. Though more than two-thirds of the corpsmembers in any given program year were white, the remaining corpsmembers included blacks, Hispanics and Asians in proportions similar to their distribution in the total population. Between 30 and 40 percent of YACC corpsmembers reported that they came from economically disadvantaged families.

Program operations varied from place to place, and work ranged from challenging to routine. The emphasis was on accomplishing conservation work; little provision was made for support services or skill development. All enrollees were paid the federal minimum wage for 40 hours of work a week. The average length of stay in the year-long program was about four months.

The YACC provided a field experience for future corps to build upon. It demonstrated to corps planners that:

- Worthwhile conservation projects for youth can be developed from backlogs in the work of federal and state natural resource agencies.
- A corps can seek the benefits of open enrollment and still attract low-income youth.
- A complex and diffuse administrative structure militates against developing a cohesive and engaging corps program with a broad constituency of support.
- Federal funding, while minimizing fundraising efforts, subjected the corps to political and administrative uncertainties and restrictions that seriously affected operations.

The YACC was dropped at the end of the Carter administration and allowed to expire without renewal under the Reagan administration. However, it left a legacy of experienced youth corps advocates and program operators and a number of state programs that were patterned after its model.

THE THREE STATE PROGRAMS

The three state programs profiled in this volume -- those of Wisconsin, Michigan and Texas -- all derive from the YACC model, filtered through the experiences of the California Conservation

Corps. As a result, they have some similarities but also many differences.

In common, each is a state-level program, open to state residents who meet requirements regarding age, income or other criteria that the state has imposed. All are authorized through the state legislative process or by action of the governor; receive a substantial part of their funding from state revenues; perform beneficial work on public lands, waterways and other public property; and develop most work projects through the state's natural resource agencies.

These programs also share some goals, philosophies and program features. They were each developed to address the youth unemployment problem in the state and provide 40 hours of minimum-wage employment to the youth whom they enroll. The program philosophies of each of these corps declare that there are valuable lessons to be learned from hard work -- among them discipline, punctuality, teamwork and pride in achievement. As such, each emphasizes relatively labor-intensive conservation work which generally takes place in rural areas of the state. For all three programs, the result of these labors has been impressive improvements to public lands and assets of the state.

There are also noteworthy differences in the programs. For example:

Goals. For the Michigan and Wisconsin corps, improving public lands is a goal of equal standing with that of providing employment for young adults. In the Texas corps, the predominant goal is youth employment; no consensus exists among participating agencies on the salience of work on public lands as a central goal of the TCC.

Targeting. Michigan's program is the only one of the three that has welfare reduction as an explicit goal. Both corpsmembers and crew supervisors are General Assistance or AFDC recipients whose cash benefits are discontinued while they remain in the program. The Wisconsin corps enrolls only unemployed youth without regard to family income. In the Texas corps, only disadvantaged youth who meet income qualifications for service under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) can participate.

Administration. Both the Wisconsin and Michigan corps are entities of state government; the Texas corps is an independent, non-profit agency with strong ties to state government. The Wisconsin and Michigan corps are decentralized, with non-residential projects scattered in many locations throughout the state. They operate with small central staffs and depend on work sponsors for daily program operation and supervision of corpsmembers and crewleaders. These two corps offer contrasting experiences regarding the degree to which, under such an arrangement, a corps

can maintain control over productivity and preserve its identity among corpsmembers, field staff and sponsors.

The Texas program is much more centralized. It operates from a few residential centers, has more staff relative to the number of corpsmembers and maintains more functions, such as recruitment and daily supervision of corpsmembers, under its direct control.

Funding. The Wisconsin and Michigan corps are supported by state funds, Wisconsin at $5 million over two years, Michigan at $5 million for one year. Both support 500 slots at that level of funding. The Texas corps' $1.6 million annual budget supports about 150 annualized slots; 40 percent of its resources are from the private-sector and 60 percent from federal JTPA funds administered by the state. Substantial in-kind support is provided by a number of state agencies in all three states.

Private-sector participation. The Wisconsin program is a state agency with a citizens' board active in refining corps policy and selecting projects. The Texas corps is operated by a non-profit agency with a high degree of private-sector involvement. It is, in fact, a public/private partnership in which the private-sector partners assume broad responsibilities for funding, participating on the corps' advisory board, and providing jobs for corps graduates. The private sector has no institutional role in the Michigan Corps.

Nature of sites and enrollment. The Michigan and Wisconsin programs are both largely non-residential, and they draw a predominantly white population from the rural communities that surround their work sites. Their experience points to the difficulty that rural non-residential programs may experience in enrolling urban minority youth. By contrast, the Texas program is residential and has recruited a population that is almost exclusively black and Hispanic.

Youth development. During their first year, neither the Wisconsin nor the Michigan program refined their youth development programs -- features designed to promote the personal growth of participants -- much beyond what could be achieved within the work setting. The Texas program, however, has a highly developed approach that includes a mandatory education program that provides corpsmembers with four to six hours of classes a week and a point system for rewarding youth for their accomplishments on the job, in the classroom, in living quarters, and on supervised trips.

Job-finding. The Michigan and Texas programs differ from the Wisconsin corps in their emphasis on obtaining job placements for their participants. Both encourage participants to look for jobs during their program stay. The central staff of the Texas Conservation Corps actively pursue private-sector placements for

participants, relying in part on the business members of its advisory board to provide jobs and facilitate access to other employers.

* * * *

The four program profiles that follow provide an overview of the history and context in which each program came into being; describe program features, participant characteristics, funding and costs; present something of the flavor of the program in action; and delineate lessons from program experiences that would be of interest to those who want to know more about the potential of this kind of programming.

The YACC, as the earliest and in some ways the precursor of the three state programs, is discussed first, followed by the Wisconsin, Michigan and Texas programs in the order of their initiation. The four profiles are published in a single volume for the convenience of the reader.

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Youth Corps Profiles:

The Young Adult Conservation Corps

by David Lah
Nancy Peterson

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Young Adult Conservation Corps (YACC) was a federally funded conservation corps program in operation between 1977 and 1982. It was a year-round corps with both residential and non-residential centers where corpsmembers worked on physical projects primarily for natural resource agencies. At its peak, the YACC maintained a capacity of roughly 25,000 enrollee slots for young men and women between the ages of 16 and 23. The program was one of the few recent government-sponsored employment efforts that did not have eligibility criteria based on family income. According to its enabling legislation:

> "It is the purpose of this title to establish a Young Adult Conservation Corps to provide employment and other benefits to youth who would not otherwise be currently productively employed, through a period of service during which they engage in useful conservation work and assist in completing other projects of a public nature on Federal and non-Federal public lands and waters."

Of all recent federal youth programs, the YACC most closely approached the model of the Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps. Like the Civilian Conservation Corps and many other corps, and unlike some other youth programs, the YACC attempted to increase the employability of youth through productive work rather than through skills or other training outside the workplace, and placed substantial weight on performing needed service to the community -- in particular, environmental work on public lands.

As the only recent example of a year-round national conservation corps program, it serves as one of several possible models for national service. An examination of the YACC experience can help inform the debate about what form such a program could take, what kinds of work it can do, whom it will attract and problems it may face.

Although the YACC was a national program, it had little visibility. Several factors contributed to its low profile: the YACC was part of a much larger package of youth programs initiated by the Carter Administration; joint administrative responsibilities discharged by the Departments of Labor, Interior and Agriculture, and the presence of state-operated programs, hampered creation of a strong identity for the YACC; and, in general, the YACC did not seek public attention.

The program operated for five years -- three at full strength -- and did not have a major evaluation. The literature available on the YACC includes records of Congressional hearings and a national conference held by the Human Environment Center in 1981,

annual reports prepared by the Departments of Interior and Agriculture, a study by the Youth Policy Institute in 1982, a history of the program compiled by the Forest Service, and a collection of newspaper clippings and memoranda.

In preparing this report, P/PV reviewed the available materials and interviewed about 40 individuals who were involved with the YACC, including federal and state officials, regional representatives, camp directors, project sponsors, work crew supervisors and some former corpsmembers. Because the program did not operate after 1982, we were not able to observe the YACC in action. Interviews and review of program documents suggest that there was great variability in implementation, some based on differences imposed by the operating entities (Departments of the Interior and Agriculture and the states), and some based on local needs or idiosyncracies. Thus, while this profile provides an overview of the YACC, it cannot capture all of the variety that existed in the field.

II. CONTEXT AND HISTORY

The YACC was established as part of President Carter's Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act (YEDPA) (P.L. 95-93) in August of 1977. This act amended Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) legislation, passed in 1973, to add several programs specially targeted to youth. The YEDPA bill contained four programs, of which Title I -- The Young Adult Conservation Corps (YACC) -- became Title VIII of CETA. (YEDPA also included provisions for youth/community improvement projects, a youth entitlement demonstration, and a large authorization for general youth employment and training programs). That same month an interagency agreement was signed between the Departments of Labor, Agriculture and Interior to implement the YACC.

Creation of the YACC was inspired by the perceived success of the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC), which was established as a pilot project by the Youth Conservation Corps Act of 1970, and made a permanent program in 1974. YCC is a summer work program designed to provide young people the opportunity to work on conservation projects on public lands and develop an understanding and appreciation of the environment. Each year, the YCC enrolled several thousand youth for up to eight weeks at camps on public lands. YCC continues to operate in a few locations on a greatly diminished scale. It is open to all youth between the ages of 15 and 18. Particular emphasis was placed in the legislation on serving a heterogenous group of young people, from all "social, economic, ethnic and racial classifications."

Because YCC could enroll in-school youth over the summer and because most recruitment was done in high schools, the corps attracted a large number of relatively well-educated youth who were already interested or who became interested in issues of conservation. According to former staff and evaluations of YCC, the YCC had a spirit that is often associated with VISTA, the Peace Corps or other programs that put work within a broader social context.

Because of the success of the YCC, Forest Service and Interior staff -- along with Senator Henry (Scoop) Jackson and Congressman Lloyd Meeds -- began thinking of a year-round conservation corps for young adults to complement the YCC. In late 1975, Meeds and Jackson introduced legislation to add a Title II to the YCC, creating a year-round conservation corps for young adults. The legislation did not pass that year but, in 1977, numerous similar bills were introduced and the Carter Administration included a year-round conservation corps as part of its package of youth-focused programs to be incorporated into CETA.

While the YACC was modeled on the YCC, the two programs had important differences. The key differences between YCC and YACC are summarized in Table II.1. According to the annual YACC Joint Report to the President and the Congress on the Young Adult Conservation Corps, (December, 1979), "The Young Adult Conservation Corps (YACC) has two basic purposes: to provide employment for our Nation's unemployed young people, and to complete needed resource management work on our Nation's public lands and waters which would not otherwise be done."

Unlike other YEDPA programs, but like YCC, the YACC was not targeted strictly on the economically disadvantaged -- that is, youth did not have to meet poverty guidelines in order to be eligible for YACC. However, unlike YCC, it made employment of unemployed young adults a specific goal. To qualify for the program, participants had to be within the required age limit, out of school and unemployed at the time of application; given the lower age limit of 16, this meant that the program could and did serve substantial numbers of high school drop-outs. The YACC was also explicitly grouped with other youth employment and training initiatives -- it was legislated and funded as part of YEDPA and CETA -- while YCC was a separate program apart from employment and training legislation. Thus, while YACC was not a "targeted" program in the sense that income was a determining factor in whether or not a youth could enroll, it was aimed towards youth in need of employment and training services.

Two regulations were issued to increase the likelihood that unemployed youth would be served. The first stipulated that all recruitment be done through state employment service offices, although local sites and other CETA agencies were permitted to refer candidates to the local ES office for processing. The second required that non-residential sites be located "in or within normal commuting distance of areas of substantial unemployment -- that is, areas having an unemployment rate of 6.5 percent or above."

The YACC never became a permanent program. By 1980, the Carter Administration -- as part of its effort to streamline the federal budget -- was prepared to drop the YACC. No funds were requested in any of the 1982 budget proposals discussed in Congress.

The Reagan Administration then allowed the program "to expire without renewal." According to the Employment and Training Reporter, even though the YACC was considered successful and cost effective, it was dropped because the administration felt it did not serve the most needy youth.

TABLE II.1

Major Differences between YCC And YACC

	YCC	YACC
Legislation	YCC Act of 1970	Added to CETA legislation in 1977
Administration	Joint Interior/ Agriculture	Joint Interior/ Agriculture with Department of Labor involvement and oversight
Youth Criteria	15-18, including in-school youth	16-23, out-of-school youth who were unemployed
Recruitment	Primarily high school counselors and teachers	State Employment Service (unemployment) offices exclusively
Duration	Mainly eight-week summer program	Year round
Education	Required environmental education as integral part of program	Designed as a work program with training only as needed to do the work

III. PROGRAM ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

Initially, the YACC was to mirror the administrative structure of the Youth Conservation Corps; the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture were to be jointly responsible for administrative oversight. However, because YACC was included in the Carter Administration's Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act, all funds were allocated through the U.S. Department of Labor. Under this structure, Interior, Forest Service and the states remained the principal agencies responsible for operation of the program, but the Department of Labor retained a share of program oversight. This resulted in the following assignment of responsibilities:

- The Department of Labor was responsible for program funding, oversight and evaluation, dissemination of information, recruitment and referral, and the establishment of regulations governing program operations, as it was for all other YEDPA programs. No YACC funds were specifically allocated for these functions, although DOL did receive substantial funds to administer YEDPA generally.

- The Departments of Agriculture and Interior were responsible for overall program operation, site location, work projects, selection and assignment of corpsmembers, and reporting; 70 percent of YACC funds were equally divided between the two departments.

- The remaining 30 percent of YACC funds supported a state grant program, although Interior retained administrative oversight over the state-operated programs.

The Department of the Interior operated its part of the program through the Office of Youth Programs. Operations were run by several different departments: The Bureaus of Land Management, Reclamation and Indian Affairs; the Tennessee Valley Authority; and the Trust Territories. In order to expand the number of work sites, Interior also operated YACC projects under a cooperative agreement with the Department of Defense. Administrative oversight was provided by Interior's regional Offices of Youth Programs in conjunction with representatives of the agencies that operated camps.

The Department of Agriculture operated its YACC program through the Office of Human Resources Programs, and all sites were located within one federal agency -- the U.S. Forest Service. In

the Forest Service, YACC camps were attached to Forest Service Ranger Districts. Camps had directors or work coordinators who served as liaison with host district offices to develop work projects and manage program operations.

Administrative oversight for state grant programs was delegated to the regional offices of Interior's Office of Youth Programs. The locus of state administration varied. Most states operated their portion of the program through natural resources departments, although this varied from state to state; a few operated YACC through Employment Security Departments. Wisconsin administered its YACC program through an independent Works Project Board, whose members were appointed by the governor to represent the various geographic areas of the state. State programs were small relative to the federally run efforts; most states maintained between 300 and 700 enrollee slots.

States also varied in the degree to which they centralized their YACC programs. The few states that used work projects boards or operated the YACC through state employment security departments tended to accomplish work projects within local government park districts or other public lands. States that operated programs through natural resources departments were more centralized -- they did most project work on state land through state agencies. However, even these states subcontracted some YACC funds to local government agencies for work on local land such as city and county parks.

The table below, from a report prepared by the Youth Policy Institute, Youth Service and Conservation: Meeting National Needs in the Eighties: A Report on the Young Adult Conservation Corps, illustrates the relative size of the federal and state programs during the peak years of YACC operations.

Table III.1

Size of Federal and State YACC Programs, FY 1978-80

Fiscal Year	Number of Participants	Slots for Enrollees	
1978	51,855	Federal	19,296
		State	7,695
			27,191
1979	81,719	Federal	15,579
		State	9,197
			24,696
1980	66,522	Federal	12,995
		State	5,572
			18,567

IV. THE PROGRAM IN ACTION

Program operations varied considerably from place to place, depending upon several factors: the particular entity operating the program on a day-to-day basis, the urban or rural nature of the site, its residential or non-residential character, the characteristics of the youth, qualifications and interest of the sponsoring and YACC staff, quality of work projects and stability of funding.

CENTERS

Centers ranged from small non-residential programs of four to 15 enrollees to much larger residential and non-residential camps. More than three-fourths of the corpsmembers were enrolled in non-residential camps or centers. Although the corps aimed to have at least 25 percent of its enrollees in residential camps, for cost and administrative reasons this goal was never achieved.

According to former staff, there were some specific problems in residential centers for which staff were generally unprepared. In some cases, staff hired to run camps were used to younger, more cooperative YCC youth and were not prepared for the disciplinary problems they encountered. In some cases, staff felt that residential camps would have had fewer problems if they were more isolated from their surrounding communities -- they reported that enrollees spent too much time away from the camps and too little time engaged in campwide activities. Northern states also had problems maintaining the workload of the residential camps during the coldest winter months.

Program guidelines suggested that residential centers maintain a corpsmember to staff ratio of 7 to 1, and non-residential centers maintain a 10 to 1 ratio in a typical center of about 50 corpsmembers. Additional staff at the residential centers were required for overnight supervision, recreation and meal preparation. According to former YACC staff, about 10 percent of residential camps, those with more than 50 corpsmembers, were staffed by a director, work coordinator, administrative officer and clerical staff, along with recreation staff and counselors. In the remaining 90 percent, management and operations functions were reduced or combined in some way in an effort to contain administrative costs.

In most residential centers, staff functions were combined; for example, the center director would also be the work coordinator, the work coordinator would also handle administrative officer duties, and so on. Some smaller residential centers also reduced staff by operating as satellites, with most administrative functions handled by headquarters staff in some other location.

Staffing patterns for non-residential camps or work sites also varied. The larger work sites (about 65 percent of all non-residential sites) had a full complement of staff including a director, work coordinator, administrative staff and work crew supervisors; non-residential camps did not usually have counseling or recreation staff. In most of the remaining non-residential work sites these functions were reduced or combined; in the smallest, there may not have been any YACC staff -- supervision and coordination were provided directly by staff of the work sponsor.

In all but the smaller non-residential work sites, corpsmembers were supervised by YACC work crew supervisors. These were generally young men and women interested in the environment and working with youth. According to former YACC staff, many were college students, or had recently served in the Peace Corps or VISTA, or were teachers. They generally had little labor market experience, but were enthusiastic and enjoyed their work. They felt they were making a contribution on two fronts -- helping the corpsmembers and conserving the environment.

Other management and administrative staff were either hired directly for the YACC, or were employees of the host bureau who applied for transfers as YACC vacancies were announced. Since YACC began hiring after YCC had been operating for several years, bureau staff were familiar with the program. They applied for several reasons: simply for a change from their present assignment; as a means of a promotion or transfer to a more desirable location; or because working with youthful corpsmembers looked like an interesting challenge. Some also had been involved with the old Civilian Conservation Corps and saw a chance to resurrect it. The YACC senior staff have been variously characterized as seasoned professionals interested in trying something new, as "frustrated teachers," and as managers looking for the satisfaction of seeing the tangible results of a two- or three-year work project.

THE WORK

Prior to the start of the YACC, the Departments of Interior and Agriculture identified a backlog of 820,000 person-years of labor intensive, high priority conservation work needed on federal lands -- enough work to keep enrollees in a program the size of the YACC busy for 54 years. (See Appendix A for a summary of such projects identified by the Department of the Interior.) P/PV conducted interviews with state foresters and state park rangers who indicated that there had been (and continues to be) a similarly large backlog of work available on state lands and waters.

Work accomplished by the YACC -- both at the federal and the state level -- was carefully documented. Table IV.1 presents a summary of work completed by the combined Interior and Forest Service YACC programs in one sample year.

Work projects included tree planting, trail maintenance and construction, range fencing, restoration of historic sites, landscaping in parks, stream clearance and wildlife habitat improvement. Such projects were conducted in both rural and urban areas.

The following descriptions of exemplary projects give an indication of the type of work accomplished:

- In Lakehurst, New Jersey, crews built bridges of native cedar along nature trails, repaired drainage culverts, developed an environmental program for a local elementary school and restored a 19th century barn in the Delaware Water Gap.

- In Allegheny State Park in New York, youth worked with carpenters, stonemasons and electricians permanently employed by the park to help build 27 new cabins and maintain 300 others.

- In Fort Dix, New Jersey, enrollees built basketball, volleyball and tennis courts, an archery range, backstops for baseball fields and foot bridges on park trails, including a 50-foot cedar bridge.

- In Scottsboro, Alabama, TVA YACC crews reclaimed 550 acres of open pit mines. The enrollees planted 40,000 loblolly pine seedlings and 44,000 pounds of grass and legume seeds, distributed 173 pounds of fertilizer and constructed numerous silt dams.

- At the Golden Gate National Recreational Area in California, crews worked with a carpenter, an architect and a landscape architect to construct adaptive restorations of historic park buildings. They helped to create a music center and school, a maritime museum library and park visitor center.

Table IV.1

Work Accomplishments of
Combined Interior and Forest Service
YACC Programs, FY 1978

Reforestation	140,149 acres
Timber Stand Improvement	62,334 acres
Litter Removal (distance cleaned)	3,706 miles
Erosion Control	3,358 miles
Trails Maintained or Improved	5,134 miles
Wildlife Habitat Improved	407,024 acres
New Trails Constructed	1,437 miles
Range Revegetation	51,681 acres
Visitors Assisted	2.18 million

Source: Second Annual YACC Report

The quality of work projects appears to have varied greatly from site to site. While some crews were involved in exemplary projects such as those described above, in other places enrollees were picking up litter. Between these extremes, the YACC completed a variety of reforestation, trail construction, erosion control and routine park maintenance projects. Interviews with former YACC staff indicate that on average about 30 percent of projects consisted of routine maintenance work.

Quality of work at YACC sites was monitored by the regional representative of the Department of the Interior or the U.S. Forest Service. As noted earlier, these regional representatives had administrative oversight over both the state and federal components of the corps. In instances in which crews were used only for menial work, regional representatives would push for more productive uses of the crews. At sites where the crews were supervised by the sponsoring agency directly, exhortations by regional representatives from Interior or the Forestry Department had only limited effect, since supervisors were under no obligation to comply. However, in the large majority of sites, crews did have YACC supervisors who reported at least indirectly to the regional representatives. These supervisors appear to have made more of an effort to develop work of real value.

CORPSMEMBER COMPENSATION AND LENGTH OF STAY

Enrollees were paid the federal minimum wage for 40 hours of work per week. By statute, up to 15 percent of enrollees could be paid up to 50 percent more than the minimum wage for serving as crewleaders, assistant crewleaders, supply clerks, assistant cooks, dormitory leaders, or in other positions of leadership. In residential programs, $3 a day was deducted for food and lodging.

Enrollees could stay in the program for as long as one year. As in many other corps, however, the average length of stay was much lower -- four months. This average is within the range of the mean length of stay of other year-long corps for which data are available. For example, mean lengths of stay in the California Conservation Corps and the Michigan Civilian Conservation Corps, both statewide corps where corpsmembers do similar kinds of work and which have both residential and non-residential corpsmembers, are about five months.[1]

SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICES

YACC legislation established a conservation work program; it did not require support services for enrollees, and made only a passing reference to skill development. Nonetheless, the corps offered a few services beyond employment in the YACC. These included:

- In most sites, enrollees without a high school degree were given the opportunity to enroll in GED classes.
- The Department of the Interior established contact with a variety of unions to set up apprenticeship programs for enrollees.
- ACTION agreed to give YACC enrollees special consideration in applying for the Peace Corps or VISTA.
- Efforts were made to refer enrollees who had alcohol or drug problems to appropriate counseling services.
- Attempts were made to provide job referral and placement services to enrollees leaving the program, although this varied from camp to camp.
- In some special cases, enrollees were picked up as full-time employees by sponsoring agencies.

It appears that the residential aspect of the program was a useful support service in itself, since it provided corpsmembers the greatest possibility to be around responsible adults and to learn how to live with other corpsmembers. At the residential camps, corpsmembers also spent time with the college interns who

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[1] Mean length of stay in the CCC is computed by P/PV based on primary data collected for our assessment of the corps. Mean length of stay in the MCCC is self-reported by the corps.

directed camp recreation activities and who provided some informal counseling for enrollees. Even at non-residential sites, enrollees had contact with a number of adult work crew supervisors, the work program coordinator, the camp director and work sponsor representatives.

The YACC legislation suggested that work projects be selected to "benefit the youths participating" and to "provide work experience to participants in skill areas required for the projects." At most YACC sites, enrollees were exposed to a number of skills. An average participant had the opportunity to learn about forestry, horticulture and construction. Probably the main skill that YACC taught, however, was simply how to work -- that is, how to put in a full day of hard work, to work as part of a team and to take pride in work accomplished.

V. CORPSMEMBERS

Many youth service and conservation corps are not targeted -- that is, they do not restrict eligibility on the basis of educational or economic disadvantage. In fact, this is one of the features of corps that makes them an interesting policy option. Like the YCC and many current corps, but unlike other JTPA programs or the Job Corps, the YACC did not require applicants to meet poverty guidelines. However, unlike many current corps, it did require that applicants be unemployed, and it did encourage the recruitment of out-of-school youth. This raises two interrelated policy questions. First, did YACC attract a diverse group of youth? Second, did it serve a sufficient number of those in need to receive serious policy consideration as an employment and training option, not just as a means to accomplish needed work?

Table V.1 displays YACC participant characteristics for FY 1978 (the first year of program operations) and for FY 1981 (the last full year of operations). The table indicates that, at least on a national level, corps programs can attract youth from many backgrounds. To accomplish this, the Department of the Interior made contacts early in the program with national organizations such as the Urban League, SER and the National Council of La Raza to increase the number of minority youth. American Indians were overrepresented in the YACC compared to their distribution in the population. This is because the Bureau of Indian Affairs was one of the operating agencies that provided work sites, and because special set-asides were built into the legislation for additional projects on independent Indian reservations. As a result, while about two-thirds of corpsmembers were white (71 percent in 1978 and 65 percent in 1981), the remaining corpsmembers included blacks, Hispanics and corpsmembers from Asian ethnic groups in proportions not too different from their distribution in the country as a whole.

When the YACC legislation was first passed, some feared that the absence of an income restriction would lead to a program serving exclusively middle class and college youth. As Table V.1 indicates, this did not occur. More than a third of participants in FY 1978 and FY 1981 did not complete high school (43 percent and 35 percent respectively) according to YACC records. Only 3 percent had graduated from college; fewer than 15 percent had any college experience.

The DOL required YACC to recruit through local unemployment offices. It is not surprising, therefore, that even though the program had no income restrictions, between 30 and 40 percent of enrollees reported that they came from economically disadvantaged families. Because no certification of household income was necessary for application, the actual number of economically disad-

Table V.1

Participant Characteristics of
Combined Federal and State
YACC Programs, FY 1978 and FY 1981

	FY 1978	FY 1981
Sex		
Male	62%	65%
Female	36	33
Not Reported	2	2
Age		
16-18 years old	44%	38%
19-21	42	46
22-23	14	16
Race and Ethnicity		
White	71%	65%
Black	10	15
Hispanic	6	9
American Indian	8	7
Asian/Pacific	2	2
Not Reported	3	2
Economic Status		
Disadvantaged	38%	36%
Non-disadvantaged	56	57
Not Reported	6	7
Education		
High School Dropout	43%	36%
H.S. Grad/No College	41	46
1-3 Years of College	11	12
4 or More Years of College	3	3
Not Reported	2	3

Source: Second Annual YACC Report and FY 1981 draft Annual YACC Report.

vantaged youth may have been higher or lower than these figures suggest.

The corps seems to have achieved diversity on non-economic dimensions as well. About 40 percent of corpsmembers were younger than 18, about 40 percent were between the ages of 19 and 21, the rest were 22 or 23. About one-third of enrollees were female even though the corps did almost exclusively physical labor, which is still generally considered non-traditional work for women. The proportion of females did, however, vary from agency to agency and between the federal and state components. In FY 1978, for example, 37 percent of enrollees in the federal component were female as compared to 30 percent in the state component. The National Fish and Wildlife Service required that 50 percent of their YACC crews be female.

Foresters, park rangers and work supervisors varied in their assessment of enrollees. Some reported having crews of youth lacking labor market experience and good work habits. Others reported having crews of youth who were eager to work hard and do a good job. All agreed, though, that the YACC served a different population of youth than did the YCC. Whereas the YCC recruited in high schools and attracted a cross-section of youth from all backgrounds, the YACC recruited through state employment offices and attracted unemployed, out-of-school youth who joined the program mainly because they needed a job. Many YACC work sponsors we talked to were, in fact, under the impression that it had been a program targeted to disadvantaged youth.

YACC data from 1978 indicate that 4 percent of program terminations were direct placements into unsubsidized employment, 55 percent were otherwise positive terminations (enrollment in full-time academic or vocational school, entrance into the armed forces, enrollment in another employment and training program, completion of the maximum 12-month enrollment or entrance into unsubsidized employment through means other than placement by YACC), and 41 percent were nonpositive terminations (enrollee either quit or was fired).

Skills training seemed to be of particular importance to non-white enrollees. The U.S. Forest Service study on minority enrollment found that black and Hispanic enrollees tended to be particularly conscious of the issue of skills training: those who stayed expressed satisfaction with the training offered, and those who left often pointed to a dissatisfaction with training opportunities.

VI. COST AND FUNDING

During its first three funding years, roughly $230 million a year was allocated to the YACC. Table VI.1 lists funding appropriations for the YACC program during its five years of operation. Annual costs per slot were highest during the initial year because of start-up costs, for example, to purchase equipment and vehicles. The Department of Labor (DOL) reported annual costs per slot of $12,500 in FY 1978 and $11,500 in FY 1979. In FY 1981, the Forest Service reported an annual cost-per-slot for its YACC component of $10,800. In current dollars, the program would cost between $12,500 and $20,600 per slot.

Early in the program, DOL attempted to set cost limits at $9,000 per slot per year. Given that the program had to pay roughly $6,000 per slot per year in enrollee wages, this did not leave much for staff salaries, materials and start-up costs. Initially, DOL hoped that 60 percent of funds would go to enrollee wages, 20 percent to staff salaries, 10 percent to start-up costs, and 10 percent to materials, supplies and fringe benefits. Later, DOL recommended that 70 percent of program funds go to enrollee wages. By contrast, the original Civilian Conservation Corps allocated roughly 45 percent of program costs to enrollee wages; most state and local corps now in operation spend between 30 percent and 50 percent of their budgets on corpsmember wages.

For FY 1981, the Forest Service reported costs-per-slot of $14,200 at residential sites and $10,020 at non-residential sites. In current dollars, this comes out to roughly $16,800 and $11,800 per slot for the residential and non-residential components respectively. This is generally lower than the costs-per-slot of other corps that do similar kinds of work and also

Table VI.1

Funding Appropriations
YACC Program, FY 1978-82

FY 1978	$236 million
FY 1979	$228 million
FY 1980	$236 million
FY 1981	$142 million
FY 1982	$0 (plus $58 million from deferral of FY 1981 funds)

Source: Youth Policy Institute, 1981 YACC Report

pay wages to corpsmembers. For example, the cost-per-slot for the CCC in FY 1983-84 was $19,691 for a residential slot and $16,846 for a slot in a non-residential center; or $13,036 for a slot in a non-residential satellite (a less enriched non-residential component), depending on what assumptions are made about apportioning central administrative costs. In 1985, the cost-per-slot in the Michigan Civilian Conservation Corps, whose design features almost exactly parallel the YACC, was $19,525 for a residential and $10,084 for a non-residential slot; the San Francisco Conservation Corps, an exclusively urban and non-residential corps, spent $13,869 per slot.

One reason for the YACC's disfavor with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) was OMB's contention that the YACC was expensive relative to other federal youth training programs funded under CETA and JTPA. While that may be true, it should be noted that the YACC, like other corps, did have some expenses not always borne by these other programs. These include enrollee wages and the costs of adult supervision, materials and other items needed to conduct useful work projects. As noted above, the YACC was generally less expensive than contemporary corps with similar design features, although some of these corps have youth development components not included in YACC. Further, comparing the costs of these corps to employment and training programs ignores both the costs and potential benefits of their production goals, as well as any differential benefits to participants. One would have to measure these benefits and costs carefully before deciding if YACC was indeed more expensive than alternative youth training programs.

VII. LESSONS LEARNED

This chapter highlights some lessons to be learned from the YACC experience. The chapter is not intended as an evaluation of the program, but as a review of those strong points and concerns that consistently emerged from our review of documentation and from interviews. These lessons are applicable to national efforts to support conservation and service corps, as well as to state and local programs developing around the country.

At the most fundamental level, observers and program documents agree that the YACC did meet its two main goals. Backlogs of high-priority work were identified by the federal and state natural resource departments, and the YACC did accomplish some of this work. The program employed over 200,000 unemployed young people in over 70,000 slots from 1978 to 1980.

Because support and passage of the YACC legislation was based on the success of the Youth Conservation Corps program, program operators and supporters expected the YACC to be a similar program. Most officials who worked with both the YACC and the YCC programs agree that the YACC never was quite as successful as the YCC. People who were involved with the YCC are uniform in their praise of the program -- staff and enrollees alike viewed the program as a very positive experience. YACC receives mixed reviews.

The following lessons can be drawn from the experience of the YACC. Many of these lessons have found confirmation in the activities of contemporary corps, others inform the debate about national service.

- <u>There is a great deal of productive work for corps like the YACC to do</u>.

  The YACC predated most of the state and local conservation corps currently in operation. It demonstrated to corps planners that worthwhile conservation projects for youth can be developed from backlogs in the work of federal and state natural resource agencies.

  In a majority of sites, the YACC conducted useful conservation work such as tree planting, trail maintenance, erosion control and range fencing. In a fair number of sites, crews completed projects in which youth gained work-related skills, including construction activities and taking censuses of wildlife populations. At some sites, corpsmembers were assigned to less meaningful work, such as menial maintenance

tasks. For the most part, the latter occurred at sites where no work crew supervisors were provided.

- Removing income eligibility from programs such as YACC does not eliminate the enrollment of poor youth.

  The program showed that leaving youth employment and training programs untargeted on the basis of income does not mean that only middle class youth will be served, as some critics had feared. More than a third of YACC enrollees had dropped out of high school, more than a third were recorded as economically disadvantaged in each year for which data are available. Staff recall that YACC attracted a more disadvantaged population than the YCC; in fact some staff believed that the program served disadvantaged youth exclusively, although that was not its legislated intent nor do the data support that belief.

  The enrollment of some disadvantaged youth was accomplished by using specific recruitment sources (state employment service offices) rather than high schools and advertising in general and by locating non-residential centers in areas of substantial unemployment.

  The experience of the YACC suggests, and later corps' experience supports, the idea that corps can seek the benefits of open enrollment (development of a potentially broader base of support, interaction between corpsmembers from different backgrounds, avoidance of the stigma poverty programs may generate, etc.) and still attract low-income or poorly educated youth.

- It is difficult to develop a cohesive and engaging corps program with a complex and diffuse administrative structure.

  Administrative complexities were created by the involvement of three federal departments and a host of state agencies. The involvement of the Department of Labor added an extra bureaucratic layer and led to confusion over the program's goals. Although the split between the Departments of Interior and Agriculture and the states may be an appropriate way to allocate funds for work projects, it resulted in a somewhat cumbersome administrative structure.

Because of the decentralized structure, the program remained diffuse, no single champion developed within government for the YACC, and it never developed into a strong entity across its host bureaucracies. It also did not establish a presence or constituency outside government that could have exerted pressure for its continuation. Operating within several agencies, and without unified or strong leadership, the YACC was unable to promote itself or to attract personnel to do so. Within some centers, a cohesive and engaging program appears to have developed, but not to the degree of the Civilian Conservation Corps, the Youth Conservation Corps or the California Conservation Corps.

Other corps have unified around charismatic leadership, a social cause such as conservation or volunteerism, or both. The experience of the YACC suggests that the lack of either of these made it difficult to establish a presence, generate support and encourage a broad-based constituency for the program.

- <u>The YACC experience confirmed the critical need for committed operators, sponsor and staff</u>.

  Part of the gap between more and less successful sites can be explained by differences in project sponsors' commitment to the program. Some sponsors embraced the YACC concept and attempted to put the program to full use by developing projects that would be socially useful and interesting to youth. In other situations, sponsoring agencies lacked the time, staff, expertise or commitment to use youth constructively.

  In particular, observers and program operators believed that most of the YACC's success or lack of it was dependent on the enthusiasm, expertise and experience of the line supervisors -- the crewleaders and work projects staff. At the YACC's inception, there was no readily available pool of qualified corps professionals to work in a year-round program. Many young staff had only summer experience in such programs as the Youth Conservation Corps. The YACC was a major change. Also, cost restrictions affected pay levels, which in turn limited the YACC's ability to attract older, more experienced staff. The YACC

also appeared to have problems with staff burn-out. Several reasons are given for this: crew supervisors were required to work long hours without backup, salaries were low in relation to responsibilities and workload, staff were frustrated by a lack of job security and mobility, and there was little time or money for staff training and development.

Despite these facts, it is clear that many YACC centers operated with dedicated and qualified staff. In fact, the program left a significant legacy; many YACC staff have played important roles in youth corps efforts throughout the country, providing a level of expertise developed through their YACC experience.

- Federal funding, while it minimizes fund-raising efforts, subjects corps to political and administrative uncertainties and restrictions that can seriously affect operations.

  The YACC had a single source of funds, so it did not need to allocate a substantial effort to fund-raising responding to the requirements of multiple funders. At the same time, the YACC was burdened with starts and stops throughout its existence. This adversely affected the program's ability to develop credibility and effectiveness. Program operators reported that fluctuations in funding levels, delays in approving the federal budget and periodic hiring freezes caused shortfalls in staff and imbalances between corpsmember levels and project commitments. Funding fluctuations also resulted in an inability to purchase materials and supplies necessary for quality work projects.

  In addition, the mandated cost-per-slot in the YACC in current dollars is lower than the cost-per-slot for similar corps patterned after it. Operators report that efforts to keep cost-per-slot below $9,000 a year and to spend 70 percent of program funds on enrollee wages constricted program operation. At times, this seemed to impact program quality, particularly when sites were operated cheaply to bring down average costs.

The YACC was a fairly successful effort to bring work and youth together, and a field experience on which future programs could learn and build. In fact, current interest in youth service and

conservation corps at the local and state levels has utilized the YACC experience in many ways. In recent interviews P/PV conducted with representatives of current state youth corps programs, many cited the elimination of the YACC as a significant contributing factor to approval of programs funded by state revenues. The YACC, along with the California Conservation Corps and the YCC, has played a key role in the development of a pool of program operators and advocates who continue to be involved in the initiation and conduct of youth corps throughout the country.

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Appendix A

Summary Of Labor-Intensive Backlog Projects Identified by the U.S. Department of the Interior

a. Historical and Archeological Work: Preserving, salvaging and, in many instances, partially or totally restoring historic sites.

b. Forest Protection: Taking preventive and corrective measures necessary for the protection of forests suppressing fires, insect and disease control, seeding and planting to rehabilitate forest areas and to prevent soil erosion.

c. Wildlife Control and Protection: Research, census taking,food habitat studies, migration studies, reduction of animal overpopulation, restoration of rare species, etc.

d. Biological: Work on crop lands, animal censuses, birdbanding and fire prevention; the total estimate for these projects is 6,417,000 grassland miles, 950,000 forest acres and 87,000 crop land acres.

e. Camp and Picnic Grounds: Providing new camp and picnic grounds and rehabilitating existing sites through grounds preparation and installation of fireplaces, picnic tables etc.

f. General Grounds Improvement: Developing and improving grounds around existing structures such as historic homes, memorials and monuments as well as new areas through usual landscaping chores -- grading, seeding, sodding, fertilizing, planting and drainage development.

g. Forest Development: Brush removal and other site clearing for reforestation as well as direct seeding of trees, the planting of seedlings and stand improvement work.

h. Water Management: Construction of large retention dams, diversion dams, waterspreading dikes, stockwater reservoirs, spring developments, wells and pipelines.

i. Conservation of Natural Resources on Reclamation Lands: Seeding of grasses to control and prevent erosion; operating tree nurseries and planting seeds, seedlings and cuttings of trees; channeling streams and stabilizing banks; building small dams, jetties,

chutes, flumes and other water control structures; planting dunes; building and placing wind erosion barriers; making fire breaks and fighting grass fires; building protective fences; constructing log booms or comparable devices across streams and reservoirs for collection of debris; and work on other land or reservoir treatments to aid in conserving natural resources and protecting irrigation structures.

j. Range Improvements: Constructing range boundary and drift fences, corrals and cattle guards for the control of livestock; fences for the protection of seeded areas; water facilities; and range sample plots established for management purposes.

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Youth Corps Profiles:

The Wisconsin Conservation Corps

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Wisconsin Conservation Corps (WCC) is a state-funded program that employs young adults to work on projects that conserve the state's natural resources. Operating since 1983, the WCC is a year-round, non-residential program. It is funded to employ between 400 and 500 youth in 65 to 70 crews during a two-year cycle[1]. Each crew numbers between seven and 10 members and works under the supervision of a crewleader and an assistant crewleader. Projects are sponsored by federal, state, tribal, county and municipal governments, and by non-profit community organizations. These organizations provide materials, equipment and project direction; many also provide additional supervision over crew activities.

The WCC was selected to be profiled in P/PV's larger study of youth corps because it is a relatively new state-wide initiative that is decentralized and specifically committed to meeting the state's conservation needs by hiring unemployed youth from local communities. It is an example of a medium-sized, state-level conservation program operating with a small central staff while maintaining visibility within the state. Considerable emphasis is placed on developing a unified corps despite its wide geographic dispersion.

The program shares many features with other conservation corps. These include:

- Youth work a 40-hour week in crews under the direction of a crewleader. They receive the federal minimum wage for the hours worked.

- Work projects involve a variety of conservation, construction and resource enhancement activities.

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[1] The WCC is funded to employ between 400 and 500 youth over two years. The total number of youth enrolled at any time varies during the period. Youth are employed for a maximum of one year and are assigned to one of the WCC's year-long projects. These projects are initiated on a cyclical basis during five phases of the two-year period. Thus, at the beginning and end of the biennium, only 25-30 projects employing 200 or so youth may be underway. At the midpoint in the two-year period, projects overlap and increase the total number of youth to more than 500. Therefore, while it may be convenient to say that, on average, the WCC employs about 240-250 youth per year, the total employed at any one time varies widely depending upon when in the biennium the tally is done.

- Clear rules and methods of operation govern the activities of participants: fighting and intimidation, alcohol and drugs, use of weapons and misuse of equipment are all proscribed. Doing one's fair share and respecting the authority of crewleaders and sponsors are required.

- Projects are sponsored by government agencies and not-for-profit organizations; they must demonstrate that the project will benefit the state by enhancing and preserving natural resources.

- Considerable attention is given to developing a "corps spirit." Newsletters, WCC hard hats and badges, and other techniques are used to support participants' sense of being in an organization that is larger than the specific work crew to which they are assigned.

The Wisconsin Conservation Corps is distinctive from many other conservation corps in several ways:

- The corps' structure and operation was defined extensively in the enabling state legislation that created it. Although the legislation leaves substantial latitude for program managers, the law specifies how participants and sponsors are to be recruited, crewleader qualifications, and other operational matters.

- The corps is governed by a volunteer citizen board of directors that is highly active in selecting yearly projects and refining corps policy.

- The WCC is limited to unemployed youth, without regard to income or family background, between the ages of 18 and 25.

- Participants are recruited from local and surrounding communities to work on projects.

- Upon successful completion of a year's service in the WCC, participants are eligible for a $500 cash grant or $1,000 in tuition credits.

- Although crewleaders must meet some of the same eligibility requirements as corpsmembers and, in addition, are eligible for some of the same

benefits that corpsmembers enjoy -- they must be unemployed or underemployed and they are eligible for a cash grant or tuition grants at the end of a year -- they have fairly extensive responsibilities for the operation of the program. These include daily supervision, hiring and termination recommendations, and dissemination of information about the WCC.

- Projects are community-based and involve participation from a wide variety of organizations including state and county agencies, municipal governments and not-for-profit organizations. Sponsors play important roles in effectively using WCC crews and offering project direction.

- For a project to be approved, sponsors must document sufficient work activities to occupy a crew for a full year.

This profile of the WCC is based upon visits by Public/Private Venture's (P/PV) staff to work projects, discussions with board members, staff and participants, and attendance at crewleader training sessions. Two P/PV research staff spent a total of seven days visiting five work sites, reviewing records and materials at corps headquarters and meeting with crewleaders and other program staff during a crewleader training session for new and returning crewleaders. In addition, P/PV reviewed program materials and other documents during preparation of this report. Quantitative data presented in the report were provided by the WCC from their records and were not independently verified by P/PV.

The remainder of this report considers several topics. Chapter II summarizes the events leading to the creation of the WCC and describes its early history. In Chapter III, the administrative structure of the program is described. The fourth chapter describes program delivery, including how work projects are developed and the types of work projects that are done by the WCC. Chapter V describes characteristics of the youth who enroll in the WCC. Chapter VI reviews the costs associated with operating the corps. Chapter VII concludes the report with a discussion of the program's long-term goals including several organizational innovations being considered to strengthen it. It also reviews some of the challenges facing the Wisconsin Conservation Corps and summarizes the lessons the WCC may offer for other corps.

II. HISTORY AND GOALS

CREATION OF THE WCC

The Wisconsin Conservation Corps resurrects a historical solution to meeting conservation and employment needs in the state. The Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps established a strong legacy in this area. In Wisconsin alone 92,000 men served in 54 camps. Participants in the CCC, many now retired, are strong proponents of similar types of programs. During the 1970s, the Young Adult Conservation Corps had numerous projects in the state, which depended on this federal project to complete needed conservation work. When the YACC was cancelled during the initial years of the Reagan Administration, there was considerable interest in establishing a state-funded program to continue its work, especially since the unemployment rate among young Wisconsin citizens remained high.

The Wisconsin Conservation Work Projects Board, which had administered the YACC, organized a conference in November 1982. This forum was co-sponsored by a wide variety of groups including unions, the NAACP, CETA administrators, parks and forest associations, the Sierra Club and numerous state agencies. The conference convened most of the key players whose support was needed to establish a conservation corps. Conference participants recommended that the newly elected governor create a state conservation corps. During the next legislative session, the new Speaker-elect of the Assembly, who participated in the conference, set up a new Committee on Forest Productivity and Rural Development. Although the committee was given considerable latitude, the Speaker did give it one specific task -- to determine the feasibility of a state conservation corps program.

A sub-committee was formed for this purpose. It adopted a pro-corps position and studied several existing programs, including the California Conservation Corps, the Ohio Civilian Conservation Corps and Canada's Katimavik. Testimony at hearings throughout the state was generally positive and the concept of a corps received support in the press. However, some critics charged that such a program would be a make work program with no lasting benefits and more bureaucrats in Madison. This concern over creating a new state bureaucracy was fueled by a fiscal crisis in the state at the time.

In counterattack, "No Barracks or Bureaucrats" became the proposal's campaign slogan. Proponents of a Wisconsin corps promised a program for half the cost of the California Conservation Corps. They also promised a lean staff in Madison and a budget devoted almost entirely to youth wages and crewleader salaries. In addition, they promised that the work

done by the corps would have lasting benefits to the state and would engage youth in meaningful employment.

A source of funds for the corps was another stumbling block, since the state's treasury was in poor condition. However, at this critical juncture, a surplus in a forest mil tax (the state's property tax) fund was discovered and earmarked as the initial funding source for the WCC. The creation of the WCC was included as part of the state's budget bill which was passed and signed in July 1983. The Governor appointed the seven-member citizen's board of directors by the end of August.

The legislation set three fundamental objectives for the corps:

- **Employment of young adults.** Providing employment for young men and women in all regions of the state.
- **Conservation.** Conserving, developing, enhancing or maintaining the natural resources of the state through the implementation of conservation projects that have a long-term beneficial impact on the environment.
- **Personal development.** Encouraging and developing work skills, discipline, cooperation, meaningful work experiences, and training and educational opportunities for corps participants.

START-UP OF THE WCC

The legislative subcommittee that had proposed the corps remained active during its initial months. The subcommittee and staff from the Department of Natural Resources began work to implement the legislation, setting up the first meeting of the governing citizen's board and drafting early versions of applications for sponsors of work projects. Interviews for executive secretary were held in September and the selected candidate began work on October 3rd.

The board acted quickly to identify and make policy and programmatic decisions and requested applications from potential sponsors in September. County foresters and the Department of Natural Resources had been following the legislative process and were ready with project proposals, and the board selected the first four projects by the end of October. Of these, two began in mid-November and the third by the end of the month; the fourth was delayed until January by logistical problems. At the start of the first three projects, there were few written procedures; most of the coordination of corps activities and promulgation of corps policies were handled between the executive secretary and the sponsors by telephone.

To help publicize the creation of the WCC, a whirlwind tour was organized. The state-wide campaign also coincided with the 50th anniversary of the national forest system in Wisconsin, the 50th anniversary of the Civilian Conservation Corps and Smokey the Bear's birthday. The cartoonist who created the Smokey character in 1933 participated in the event and drew an updated version of Smokey wearing a WCC crewmember hard hat. The state-wide tour and its accompanying local press coverage increased the visibility of the new WCC.

Within five months of its creation by law, the Wisconsin Conservation Corps had selected its staff, established its initial policies and set to work on its first projects. The WCC then turned its attention to stabilizing its structure and expanding its operations.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The Wisconsin Conservation Corps operates as a separate agency within the executive branch. It is governed by a volunteer board of seven citizens appointed by the governor, with day-to-day administrative duties performed by a central staff. In the field, crewleaders and assistant crewleaders supervise small workcrews to complete projects. This section reviews the administrative structure of the WCC and describes the roles and responsibilities of the principal positions within the organization.

CITIZEN'S BOARD

The seven members of the board are appointed by the governor for six-year terms.[2] This citizen's board has authoritative oversight responsibilities and is similar to the boards of some other state agencies' organizations in Wisconsin including those specifically charged with protecting the state's resources -- the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture. The board appoints the executive secretary and makes final selections of WCC projects.

The WCC board is highly involved and active. During the initial months of the program, it spent many days developing and refining corps policies. It has continued to be highly active in selecting projects for the WCC and makes every effort to ensure that projects are beneficial both to crewmembers and to the state's conservation needs.

The board, however, has also allowed the central staff considerable freedom to do their jobs without interference. This balance between oversight and staff latitude has allowed the WCC to be responsive to changing program conditions and community needs.

By statute, the board must represent the state's regional, environmental and agricultural interests and its composition reflects these concerns. Board members include conservationists and environmentalists, representatives from the business and academic communities, civic organizers and a member of the Chippewa tribe. One member served in the original CCC and another has been a member of the Wisconsin Legislature.

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[2] At the creation of the WCC, initial board members were appointed for two-, four- and six-year periods to allow an orderly turnover of board membership.

CENTRAL STAFF

The Wisconsin Conservation Corps was created with a mandate to maintain a small staff. As a result, WCC is administered by a very lean central staff comprised of the executive secretary, a projects coordinator, a personnel coordinator, an operations manager, a field support specialist, and two part-time support staff. All permanent positions in the WCC central office, with the exception of the executive secretary, are classified positions in the state government and are subject to civil service requirements. The corps also uses the services of a part-time editor to produce a corps newsletter and conduct other public relations activities.

The central staff of the WCC works in the state capital in Madison and administers all program activities from there. It maintains contact with board members, crewleaders and work sponsors through a variety of methods including: quarterly board meetings, biannual project visits, regular mailings, telephone calls, a corps newsletter. In addition, annual training conferences involving crewleaders are held. Beginning during the 1985/87 biennium, project sponsors also will be required to attend these annual sessions.

The executive secretary is the primary administrative officer for the corps, attending to both operational and political issues. The WCC's enabling legislation requires coordination of its activities with various state agencies at the cabinet level. It is left to the executive secretary, on behalf of the board, to do this. Similarly, the position requires sensitivity to the needs and concerns of state legislators, municipal authorities, organized labor leadership and other interested groups. Beyond these responsibilities, the executive secretary also is charged with overseeing the 65 or more ongoing projects spread across the state, ensuring that corps guidelines are being followed and program objectives achieved.

William Brakken, the Executive Secretary of the WCC, was on the staff of the legislative committee that created the corps and spent considerable time studying other youth corps models when writing the legislation. Brakken's enthusiasm for the corps has been instrumental in generating interest around the state and in maintaining legislative support. Sponsors, board members and crewleaders alike commented on the very positive, strong role that Brakken played in the creation and implementation of the corps in its early program years.

The projects coordinator position is held by Joan Sanzen. Her responsibilities include recruiting sponsors, working with sponsors who have questions about the application process or sponsor responsibilities. Sanzen's primary task is reviewing the

original project applications, rating them according to the criteria established by the enabling legislation, and making recommendations to the board about selection. Upon selection of projects, the focus of her activity is directed at monitoring compliance with the scope of project work. Sanzen maintains ongoing liaison with projects in the field and is responsible for enforcing safety standards. She contacts most projects regularly and is in more frequent contact with projects that are experiencing difficulties. She also reviews progress reports submitted by both crewleaders and sponsors that detail crew activities and movement toward project completion.

Among Sanzen's additional activities is negotiating with sponsors on matters relating to the expansion of ongoing projects.. Sponsors must submit a project addendum to ask for changes in the scope of work that was detailed in the initial application. According to Sanzen, these requests are often made because the crew has surpassed the sponsor's expectations.

Jean Hale is the WCC personnel coordinator. She is responsible for all matters relating to employment of WCC crewmembers, including wages, workers' compensation, skills development, and treatment and supervision of crews. The personnel coordinator makes recommendations to the board on matters relating to personnel policies and procedures. Hale approves crewleader and crewmember hiring and dismissals, oversees compliance with affirmative action goals and is involved in crewmember recruitment efforts. She organizes crewleader training and acts as the liaison with the Department of Administration, which administers the WCC payroll and provides accounting support.

The WCC has recently filled two new positions on its staff. The first, the operations manager, assists the executive secretary in budget preparation and monitoring. The second position, the field operations specialist assists the projects coordinator and the personnel coordinator in monitoring and enforcing corps personnel policies in the field.

Like other central staff positions, excepting the executive secretary, these new positions will be included under state civil service regulations.

CREWLEADERS AND ASSISTANT CREWLEADERS

Principal responsibility for making the Wisconsin Conservation Corps work in the field rests heavily with the crewleader. Once the WCC board approves a project sponsor, the WCC staff works with the sponsor to identify and recruit a suitable crewleader who has both supervisory experience and experience working effectively with youth. In particular, the WCC looks for individuals who have technical skills necessary to accomplish the work project. Supervisory skills and those skills related to

dealing with youth, while important, are secondary and the WCC believes that crewleaders can be trained in them. Crewleaders are often recruited from the community in which the project is located. In some cases, the sponsor interviews potential candidates referred by the Job Service; in other cases, candidates are referred by WCC staff. College students are also recruited to be crewleaders through college placement services. In any case, final approval rests with the staff in Madison.

Qualifications for crewleaders are similar to those for WCC crewmembers. Crewleaders must be unemployed or underemployed at application. By underemployed, the WCC means that an individual is not employed in a position for which he or she was trained or is earning less than the entry-level crewleader wage. Crewleaders must be at least 18 years old, however, unlike the requirements for regular crewmembers, there is no upper limit on the age of crewleaders. In the projects "on line" in fall 1985, crewleaders ranged in age from 21 to 58. The normal length of service for a crewleader is two years with the possibility of extension at the board's discretion upon recommendation of the WCC central staff. Crewleaders are paid $6.00/hour to start and are eligible for all benefits available to crewmembers. Second-year crewleaders are paid $6.90/hour and third-year crewleaders are paid the maximum of $7.42/hour.

Crewleaders are charged with directing daily crew activities, acting as a liaison with the sponsor and community, coordinating delivery of materials, enforcing WCC policies and procedures, participating in hiring and termination decisions and serving as the local spokesperson on WCC activities. In general, the responsibilities of the WCC crewleader exceed those observed in many other corps.

Several weeks after the beginning of a project, the WCC appoints assistant crewleaders from among the corpsmembers at the site. They have supervisory responsibility when the crewleader is away and also supervise smaller numbers of crewmembers when crews are split to do different tasks at one work site. Assistant crewleaders are paid $3.85/hour. In the event that an assistant crewleader is appointed after serving a full year as a corpsmember, the rate of pay is $4.25/hour. It is important to note that assistant crewleaders are not supposed to be candidates who were not selected to be the crewleader, but are regular corpsmembers who were promoted after several weeks on the project.

In general, the crewleader and assistant are with the crew throughout the work day except to deal with administrative details or maintain contact with the sponsor. However, as a rule, one or the other of these supervisors is always with the crew. The crewleader and the assistant participate fully in the manual labor being done by the crew. Rarely do crewleaders watch

while crewmembers do the work. In this regard, everyone is a member of the WCC working crew.

SPONSORS

Although not technically part of the WCC, the sponsoring organizations and their staffs play a crucial role in the implementation of the program. Any federal, state, tribal or municipal agency can apply to sponsor a WCC crew. In addition, non-profit organizations can also sponsor a crew if they can demonstrate that the crew's activities will serve the conservation needs of the state or an otherwise "valid public purpose."

In many instances, sponsor involvement is predicated on the interests of a particular employee who plans to use a WCC crew to accomplish tasks not covered by the current year's budget. For example, one park ranger noted that he had applied for a crew because cutbacks in budget allocations had made it impossible for him to hire enough staff to complete the park refurbishment he had planned. Using a WCC crew to do these tasks allowed him to accomplish his objectives while paying only for materials and equipment.

Most sponsoring organizations, in addition to providing materials and equipment, provide technical and other supervisory assistance. Thus, the park ranger above spent several hours each day with the crew and crewleader planning work activities and doing some direct supervision of more technical tasks. In essence, crew oversight had become part of this ranger's normal workload. Most sponsors, it should be noted, do not apply for a WCC crew merely to get "free help." Rather, they recognize the challenge involved in developing work activities for 10 young people and see this as an opportunity to help the crewmembers get experience. In conversations with sponsors, two themes always surface -- the productivity of the crew and the need for this program to help young people get job experience. The appeal of the WCC to these sponsors rested squarely with these dual benefits. The executive secretary notes that sponsors who approach the WCC expecting "free help" generally do not continue the application process or do not apply for a second year.

Most sponsors recognize that the corpsmembers are not their employees but are part of the WCC. They support WCC's efforts to develop an "esprit de corps" by following WCC policies and procedures when dealing with crewmembers, and by recognizing the accomplishments of the crew in their publications -- such as park newsletters and brochures -- and in press releases to local newspapers.

SPONSOR-CREWLEADER RELATIONSHIP

Crewleaders are employees of the WCC but work closely with sponsors. In the early program years, crewleaders were only informally oriented to WCC policies and procedures. In recent years, the WCC has placed more emphasis on crewleader training, including special sessions to improve management and leadership skills. These training sessions allow crewleaders from around the state to meet and exchange ideas and share problems. Nevertheless, it is apparent that crewleaders see the sponsor as the immediate "boss" on the work site and the WCC as a more distant entity.

Sponsors often participate in setting goals for the day or the week in collaboration with the crewleader. Sponsors provide technical assistance to the crew on specialized tasks. Thus, crew supervisory responsibility generally rests with the WCC crewleader; technical and overall project supervision rests with the sponsor.

There is some concern among the central WCC staff that some crewleaders have become de facto employees of the sponsor and have begun to represent the sponsor's interest over that of the WCC. One example of this was the discovery that crewleaders were being asked by sponsors to write requests for contract modifications and to draft applications for new WCC crews at the site for the next program year. As a result, the central staff remains vigilant over the relationship between crewleaders and sponsors. It seeks to ensure that WCC guidelines and procedures are being followed and that agreements governing the work at sites are being observed.

THE WCC CREW

The WCC is a non-residential program and crewmembers are recruited locally to work on community projects. The basic operational unit of the WCC is the crew. During the 1985-87 biennium, the WCC expected to field 65 crews throughout the state with a total authorized enrollment of 486. Crews can have few as seven members or as many as 10, including the crewleader and assistant crewleader.

The requirements for joining the WCC are few. Participants must be unemployed when they apply and when they join.[3] Crewmembers

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[3] In order to set a standard definition of unemployment, the WCC has adopted a policy of admitting youth who worked less than 16 hours during each of the four weeks prior to enrolling in the WCC. In addition, an individual must be unemployed at the time of application, but may accept a temporary position between the

must be between the ages of 18 and 25 on the day of enrolling in the program.

By law, applicants must sign a statement of intention to serve in the Wisconsin Conservation Corps program for a full one-year period. In addition, although no physical examination is required to apply, the applicant must furnish a physical examination report before enrolling. Beyond these specific legislative requirements, the WCC has also adopted additional guidelines that may be used by sponsors and crewleaders in the recruiting and hiring process. These include:

- Applicant motivation,
- Willingness to complete a full year's service,
- Interest in tuition scholarship,
- Personal reasons for wishing to join the WCC, and
- Affirmative action goals.

These items are given more weight than previous work experience or education. The WCC emphasizes to sponsors that the program has dual purposes -- getting productive work completed in the community and giving youth a chance to learn useful skills. These suggested guidelines are designed to ensure that the program does not hire only experienced workers.

The major objective in hiring is to select candidates who stand to benefit the most from employment with WCC. As the executive secretary commented during a radio program, "These are not the castoffs of society. They are people who need a start."

RECRUITMENT

The State Job Service refers applicants to project sites. Once a project is approved, the sponsor informs the local Job Service office and requests referrals for the positions that are available. While the Job Service is the principal source of applicants, word-of-mouth has begun to play an increasingly important role. Sponsors may advertise in the local newspapers, and applicants also hear about the program from local TV and newspaper reports.

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time of application and actual enrollment without jeopardizing his or her eligibility. Finally, the individuals who have participated in a jobs training program of limited duration (less than three months) just prior to applying to the WCC are also eligible to join.

In a recent survey conducted by the WCC, crewmembers were asked how they learned of the corps. Among the 267 corpsmembers who responded, the following sources acknowledged:

129	(48%) State Job Service
92	(34%) newspapers
73	(27%) friends
7	(3%) radio
21	(8%) other

HIRING

Generally, there are more applicants than openings. The sponsor and the WCC crewleader conduct interviews with applicants several weeks before the anticipated start of the project. Initial decisions are made, and after approval by the central WCC office, offers are extended. Several alternate candidates are selected in the event that a position becomes available. The WCC has had difficulty attracting women and minority candidates for positions in many communities and has worked with sponsors to develop local strategies to attract these youth.

To a significant degree, the interview process acts as a self-selector for corpsmembers. The interview is used to help applicants understand the expectations of the WCC and to determine whether or not the applicant is still interested. Because there are more applicants than openings, sponsors and crewleaders are able to select the best or most motivated. There is often a tension between hiring those who stand to benefit the most and those who can contribute most to the success of work projects. In early projects, this was particularly evident as sponsors regularly attempted to hire corpsmembers who had work experience. However, according to the personnel coordinator, this has been minimized with the involvement of crewleaders who have received orientation to WCC hiring standards and guidelines.

Before final job offers are made, the crewleader or sponsor must clear the selections with the central WCC personnel coordinator in Madison. The central staff usually concurs with the recommendations from the field, but monitors compliance with WCC hiring standards. In one instance a crewleader recommended a crew of applicants largely composed of college graduates. The recommendations were not approved; recruitment and hiring were reopened to obtain a more balanced crew.

Upon selection, crewmembers are required to submit a statement of physical health and are told when the project will begin. When crewmembers leave or are fired, the sponsor and crewleader may contact others who had initially applied or conduct another recruitment campaign to attract applicants as needed. The WCC has asked crewleaders and sponsors to recruit minority and female applicants for vacant positions. Crewmembers who are hired after

the start of a project are eligible to remain in the WCC for a full year. Thus, a crewmember who begins three months into a project is eligible to serve an additional three months in another WCC project in the area during the next project cycle. However, if no new WCC project is scheduled to begin in the area, the crewmember may not be able to complete a full year's service.

IV. THE WCC IN ACTION

This section describes the operation of the WCC. Although the corps is still relatively young, it has established a clear sense of how it will run and has created specific mechanisms for operating. The section considers several key elements of the operational components of the WCC:

- Work projects, including how sponsors are recruited and projects selected;
- Observations of ongoing WCC projects;
- Efforts to build an "esprit de corps";
- Youth development activities; and
- Employability and placement after the WCC.

WORK PROJECTS

Legislative Mandates

The enabling legislation for the WCC was specific about the types of projects appropriate for the WCC, the types of sponsors who might apply for WCC crews, and the process and criteria by which projects would be selected by the board. The principal requirements for a project are that it provides employment opportunities for WCC crewmembers and is a conservation activity. Wisconsin law defines a conservation activity as "...an activity that has a long-term beneficial impact on the land and waters of this state and enhances, promotes or preserves wildlife, fisheries, forest, agricultural, recreational, historical, cultural and commercial resources. This term also includes but is not limited to energy conservation projects, reclamation of lands and disaster assistance.

The legislation limits the eligible sponsors of conservation projects to federal, state, county and local government agencies, and non-profit organizations. The WCC is required to take steps to encourage local governments to be sponsors and to facilitate their applications. Non-profit organizations that submit applications must offer evidence that the proposed project serves a valid public purpose. The Wisconsin legislation goes considerably further than that of many other states by specifying the guidelines for selecting conservation projects for approval. Of particular note are requirements that projects provide meaningful labor-intensive activities, promote long-term conservation of resources, are compatible with other projects in the area and appropriate for the WCC, show evidence of sponsor

commitment to the project, and will ultimately benefit a large segment of the public.

The legislation establishes procedures for selecting projects, including requirements for complete project cost estimates; detailed work plans specifying the nature, scope and duration of the project, the equipment and supplies required, and the number of corpsmembers employed; a signed agreement of responsibility between the sponsoring organization and the WCC; and additional requirements for review, implementation, supervision and coordination of projects.

Project Selection

The WCC board and staff have translated these legislative requirements into operational terms. They have prepared a comprehensive Sponsor Project Application, an extensive Program Sponsor Handbook, a Crewleader Handbook, a Participant Handbook, a work application for crewmembers and a project evaluation form. The latter permits the corps to rank ongoing projects that are expected to re-apply for another year. These rankings are a composite of evaluations of the project completed independently by the WCC central staff, the crewleader, and corpsmembers.

The board and staff have also developed a very clear set of priorities for assessing and selecting conservation projects. The list of these priorities is reproduced in Appendix A. In general, projects that have clear conservation objectives receive top priority; those that provide basic maintenance have lower priority. Ineligible projects among the latter are groundskeeping, garbage pickup, and other tasks that are labelled "non-productive."

Sponsors are required to detail the tasks that the WCC crew will be expected to accomplish. The WCC also demands that sponsors demonstrate that sufficient work is planned to occupy a crew for 58 full weeks. The WCC has adopted this 14-month standard because it discovered that sponsors tended to underestimate how much work could be accomplished by a crew. By requiring sponsors to plan for more than a year's activities, the WCC encourages the sponsor to have backup projects in the event the original work falls through or is finished ahead of schedule.

The WCC also requires that sponsors develop a minimum of four to six weeks of work activities that can be done inside by crewmembers in the event of inclement weather. Inclement weather is defined as extreme cold, steady downpour or high winds. The WCC is careful to point out, however, that outside activities during the winter are permitted.

The board, in making its selection of projects, also considers several other issues. As a state-wide program, the WCC is

expected to serve the needs of communities in all parts of the state including urban as well as rural areas. In its initial years, the WCC placed most of its crews in rural areas and relatively few in the state's densely populated southeast portion surrounding Milwaukee. WCC board and staff offer several reasons for this.

First, the type of sponsors to which the WCC is most likely to appeal -- the DNR, nature conservancies, state and local parks -- tends to be located in rural areas. In addition, the availability of public land -- the site for most WCC projects -- is greatly limited in urban and suburban areas. Third, the program is prohibited from displacing full-time employees and WCC staff report that this issue has most commonly arisen in more populated and more unionized areas. Fourth, the WCC reports that the perceived impact that a single crew can have on a community is often greater in a rural setting than is the perception of that impact in a larger metropolitan area. Thus, municipal governments in urban areas are less likely to apply to sponsor a WCC crew than are their rural counterparts. This is not to say that urban projects cannot be accommodated by the WCC. The corps has had several projects in urban areas. Rather, it suggests that urban areas pose a challenge for the WCC because the availabile likely potential sponsors may be deterred because of the logistic and jurisdictional issues involved.

Having fewer WCC crews in urban areas has clear ramifications for the program. First, the WCC runs the risk of being perceived as a program designed to serve the least populated regions of the state. This can be especially problematic in times of budgetary constraints as urban representatives question the value of such a program to their constituents. In addition, the limited number of crews in urban areas makes it difficult for the corps to recruit black youth.

The WCC runs the risk of becoming "captive" to certain types of projects and sponsors. Specifically, certain communities and counties in Wisconsin need help in addressing their conservation and recreational needs and the WCC is a Samaritan for them. However, as one board member indicated, there is concern about always serving these "orphan counties." He characterized them as poor and constantly requesting state assistance. He felt that the WCC had to guard against becoming a permanent "fix" for these areas and thereby diminishing the corps' ability to serve the entire state.

The WCC has been working with potential sponsors in urban areas in an attempt to encourage applications and get more crews working in the most populated regions of the state. In addition, it has adopted a policy to limit communities or sponsors to no more than 36 months of project activity within two consecutive biennia. Although this may risk "losing" a good project, it

increases the independence of the WCC while simultaneously making the sponsor less dependent upon the corps for its source of labor.

AT THE WORK SITE

Upon enrolling in the corps, crewmembers are issued a green WCC safety hard hat and a handbook detailing corpsmember rights and responsibilities. They are required to purchase safety footwear. Crewmembers are given an orientation to the WCC by the crewleader who describes roles and rules of the corps. The sponsor then introduces the project on which they will be working and gives a general overview of the facility and purpose of the project.

Corpsmembers work 40 hours per week throughout the year. The work day begins between 7 AM and 8 AM (starting times vary by site and season) as corpsmembers arrive and the day's activities are outlined by the crewleader. Most work activities involve the full crew, including the crewleader and assistant crewleader, and are generally outdoor, relatively labor-intensive conservation work.

The Projects

During 1985, the WCC estimates that approximately 70 percent of its activities involved direct conservation work, 28 percent included construction and other physical activities. The remainder of the corpsmembers' work activities were directed at handling fire and flood emergencies throughout the state.

The WCC makes its corpsmembers available for state-level emergencies including flood and fire disaster response. Although these activities constitute only a small portion of WCC operations, the WCC feels that the corps can serve a valuable role and simultaneously prove its value to the state. In preparation for these situations, crews in certain areas receive special training by state foresters in basic forest fire fighting techniques so that the crew can safely respond to emergencies.

Rules and Regulations

The WCC has adopted and published a Code of Conduct for all WCC corpsmembers. It is printed in the WCC Corpsmember Handbook that each corpsmember receives upon enrolling. The WCC Code of Conduct states:

1. All members will bear a fair share of the workload.

2. Possession of alcohol or drugs is prohibited. Persons who report to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be sent home.

3. Intimidation, humiliation, and verbal or physical abuse of fellow members will not be tolerated.

4. Crewleaders and assistant crewleaders will be treated with respect and their instructions will be followed. Members will not exhibit insubordination or a poor work attitude.

5. Tools and safety equipment will be used in a safe and proper manner.

6. Members will not participate in unsafe horseplay.

7. Habitual tardiness and unexcused absences will not be tolerated.

8. Possession of firearms or other weapons at the work site is strictly forbidden.

9. Members will refrain from using profanity.

10. Stealing of project equipment or personal property is illegal and such incidents will be referred to law enforcement officials.

Crewleaders are expected to enforce the Code of Conduct, using their discretion in imposing different disciplinary actions. Crewleaders can offer verbal and written warnings for rules infractions and may suspend (with or without pay) corpsmembers for more serious problems. Finally, crewleaders can dismiss corpsmembers for serious violations or repeated offenses. Dismissals are reviewed by the WCC central office staff. In the interim, corpsmembers may be placed on suspension before their dismissal becomes final.

Crewleaders reported that they rarely had to resort to extreme disciplinary actions on the work site and candidly admitted that they often used considerable discretion in deciding appropriate levels of discipline. Verbal and written warnings, they said, were more frequent and were generally sufficient to get corpsmembers "back in line." Corpsmembers, when discussing corps discipline, said that the rules were very fair and that their crewleaders were fair in applying them. As one crewleader confided, it was as important that he respect the corpsmembers as it was for them to respect him. He said that he generally pulled a corpsmember aside quietly to reprimand inappropriate behavior. "Except in dangerous situations, making an example out of someone in front of his peers doesn't help anyone."

The WCC also enforces several important safety rules at the work site. Hard hats are provided to all corpsmembers with the WCC

name and logo clearly marked. They are required attire except when the crewleader exempts the crew. Work boots are required for all corpsmembers and partial reimbursement ($20) is given to corpsmembers who purchase approved protective footwear with hard toes. The WCC requires that corpsmembers dress appropriately for outdoor physical work including long pants and long-sleeved shirts (although the wearing of short-sleeved shirts can be authorized by the crewleader during the summer).

The WCC, like other corps, is especially concerned about safety on the job and teaching the importance of following safety regulations. Sponsors must demonstrate how safety compliance will be fostered at the work site. Crewleaders receive safety training and emergency first aid training. In the sites visited, sponsors and crewleaders inspected crewmembers' dress to check for safety-toe shoes and hard hats, reviewed safety precautions in using dangerous equipment and encouraged crewmembers to work together in moving or carrying heavy or bulky materials. WCC corpsmembers are eligible for worker's compensation in the event of serious injury or disability.

Observations of Work Projects

In the five project sites visited in preparing this profile, a wide range of work activities was observed -- light construction, trail building, erosion control, forest replanting, and picnic areas construction.

At a state park in the northside of Milwaukee, corpsmembers had planted new trees, were laying a gravel trail for visitors, and had refurbished several picnicking areas. Future work included reclaiming additional park land (which had served as a national defense rocket launch pad and a county dumping area). Crewmembers were enthusiastic about their work although they all noted that it was hard. In particular, crewmembers noted that the job had provided them the opportunity to learn new skills. One young man had learned to drive as a corpsmember. A young woman commented that she was looking forward to learning how to operate a backhoe that the crew used in some of its work. Other crewmembers commented that they had learned some things about park land management and tree and shrub planting. But as most WCC crewleaders and sponsors note, what the WCC most consistently provides is experience in appropriate work behavior including timeliness, responsibility and cooperation.

At a second work site, the sponsor was pleased to identify the projects that the WCC crews had completed in two years. Quite impressive was the completion of a new nature education center at this nature conservancy. The crew had dug foundation trenches and, after the foundation was poured, had participated in the raising of the building's shell; they then roughed in the walls, hung sheetrock and completed most other basic carpentry tasks.

After the crew painted the interior and exterior walls, one participant hand painted the building's shutters with wilderness scenes. The extension, approximately 40 by 50 feet, is now a classroom and reception area for the conservancy.

In the current year, the crew was rebuilding a log cabin exhibit (an earlier one had been a victim of arson). The project was notable because an area banker had donated the materials for the cabin and upon hearing that technical advice was needed to build the cabin correctly had volunteered his time to act as a part-time supervisor/consultant for the project. The WCC crew had also built raised wooden walkways to allow easy access to visitors. When showing these walkways to visitors, the sponsor was quick to identify those sections that had been completed by the WCC and those that had been built by CETA workers. The sponsor made a point of emphasizing the high quality workmanship of the WCC sections and the relatively shoddy work performed by the CETA workers.

At the sites visited, crewmembers were engaged in what appeared to be appropriate work. However, the WCC central staff admitted that it is dependent upon the judgment of the sponsor and crewleader to follow WCC guidelines. Sponsors candidly spoke of 'once in a while' straying outside of the initial task statement and using crews on other activities.

In one instance, a local company had offered the timber on a piece of property to the sponsor, provided the sponsor could get it cleared and moved. The sponsor and crewleader agreed that the opportunity should not be lost and the WCC crew was quickly dispatched to do the job. The benefits to the crew included more experience in a new setting. The profits from the sale of the timber allowed the sponsor to buy new equipment and tools for the crewmembers to use on the site. The sponsor noted that without this added revenue he would have limited the tasks that the WCC crew could have done and thus saw the deviation from the original work plan as beneficial to the crew and the park.

The work projects that P/PV observed seemed to be well executed and to enhance the facilities or grounds of the sponsor. Based on limited observations of these work sites, it appears that workers were disciplined and kept to the task at hand without constant exhortation by the crewleader. Tools were being used properly and safely and there was a spirit of cooperation between crewmembers, crewleaders and sponsors. The projects observed were not spectacular, but the enthusiasm of the crews reflected their sense that their work was important. As in the course of any work, there are inevitable periods when materials or equipment are awaited. However, in the sites observed, this appeared to be the exception and not the norm.

BUILDING AN AWARENESS OF THE CORPS AND A CONSTITUENCY

The WCC has given considerable attention to creating an awareness of the corps throughout the state and instilling a "sense of the corps" among corpsmembers scattered throughout a large geographical area. These efforts have allowed the corps to develop some recognition among the general public, but perhaps more importantly, considerable awareness among legislators and potential project sponsors in the state.

The WCC does several things to increase its visibility throughout the state. Brakken and other staff members address meetings of municipal and business leaders whenever possible to talk about the corps and its activities. As projects begin in different areas, the WCC takes considerable pains to ensure that areas' state legislators are apprised of the corps' activities and that local newspapers report on the corps' projects.

During a recent crewleader training session, a former television reporter who was coordinator of public relations for the Department of Administration, spoke to crewleaders on appropriate ways to deal with the press in both mundane and crisis situations. Crewleaders were taught when to answer reporters' queries directly and when to refer them for comment to the Madison office. They were also encouraged to build a relationship with reporters in their areas to facilitate publicity on corps activities. One crewleader reported that he had been approached to write a weekly column about conservation and environmental issues because of his position with the WCC.

The corps has also been careful to take advantage of other opportunities to gain support through good publicity. As noted above, the corps was launched during the state commemoration of the CCC's 50th Anniversary. Similarly, during deliberations on the WCC's budget, Brakken encouraged corpsmembers to attend the hearings and testify. About a dozen participants from nearby projects appeared dressed in their WCC hard hats and work clothes to talk about their experiences. In fact, testimony about the WCC, a relatively small component of the state budget, far exceeded that recorded for the considerably larger DNR request.

The WCC also publishes a monthly newsletter, "On Corps!," in which accomplishments of the corps are reported and work projects spotlighted. Crewmembers are encouraged to submit copy for inclusion in the newsletter and Brakken always writes a column that describes important developments at the legislative or board level and notes other issues relating to the corps. The newsletter is distributed to all corpsmembers and sponsors and is sent to a broad mailing list including legislators, administrators, corps planners and operators from other states and to all state media outlets.

Finally, Brakken and the WCC have recognized the importance of less flashy and inexpensive techniques to increase corps visibility and identity. Each work site is required to erect signs noting that the WCC is engaged in doing conservation work at the site. The hard hats have the WCC name and logo emblazoned on them. Caps, in the same distinctive green, have also been recently distributed to crews to wear when hard hats are not necessary.

As a result of these activities, the WCC appears to enjoy considerable visibility in the state. Local newspapers often feature articles on WCC activities in their areas and Brakken is invited to speak at gatherings of civic groups.

Despite the wide dispersion of crews, corpsmembers have been able to develop a relatively strong sense of belonging to the WCC. Unlike some state corps, WCC corpsmembers are very much aware that they are employed by the corps. They identify with the organization and are interested in what is happening to it.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND PREPARING FOR LIFE AFTER THE CORPS

The WCC's least refined component is youth development. Although the program goals, as stated in its enabling legislation, include encouraging personal development among corpsmembers, the manner in which the program has been implemented and structured emphasizes the direct employment of youth doing beneficial conservation work. Any youth development must be done as part of this work.

The WCC points to the following program components that foster youth development and education:

- Up to four hours per week can be set aside by the sponsor and crewleader to engage corpsmembers in various training and educational activities.

- Increased training of crewleaders and orientation of project sponsors has improved the use of the work setting as a forum for teaching special skills, appropriate work behavior and the like.

- The legislation that created the WCC included provision for an educational tuition voucher worth $1,000 for which corpsmembers would be eligible after completing a year of service.

The WCC staff and board acknowledge that the youth development component of the program has not been emphasized. Issues surrounding participant recruitment and project selection have taken precedence.

The WCC's corpsmember development program is heavily dependent upon crewleaders and project sponsors. As noted above, many crewleaders and sponsors have the option of offering training and development activities during the year. Veteran crewleaders at the training session recounted how they or their sponsors had contacted staff from the local employment office to run a brief seminar for crewmembers on resume preparation. Others said that they and the project sponsor had given presentations on wildlife habitat, conservation and other environmental issues. However, the depth and frequency of these optional development activities is not known.

Like the City Volunteer Corps of New York City, the WCC offers tuition vouchers to corpsmembers who serve a full year. Corpsmembers may request a $1,000 tuition voucher as their service completion bonus. The voucher is valid for three years following its issue and is twice the value of the cash service completion bonus. The voucher is redeemable at trade and vocational schools as well as academic institutions.

Despite the promotion of this type of service completion bonus, and the fact that a desire to use the bonus to continue education is one of the criteria in hiring corpsmembers, few of the youth have taken advantage of this option. After the first year, only 11 percent of eligible corpsmembers opted for the tuition voucher. Recently, this proportion has risen to 17 percent. Apparently, participants are much more interested in obtaining the direct cash payment of $500 than the delayed gratification of $1,000 in education. Although many youth at the sites visited said they were considering choosing the tuition voucher upon completion, others admitted that they had their heart set on a newer car or stereo. The WCC has recently proposed raising the amount of the tuition voucher to $1,500 while keeping the cash grant at $500 in an effort to make the educational voucher more appealing to crewmembers.

EMPLOYMENT AFTER THE CORPS

The WCC has been placing crews in the field for less than three full years. Less than two years have passed since a full year's service could have been completed. Thus, it is hard to make many generalizations about the employment experiences of the youth after the WCC. The WCC has no formal system for placing youth in positions upon completion of a year's service in the corps nor does it maintain records that document post-program experience. Some crewmembers remain in the corps a second year as Assistant Crewleaders, but this option for employment is clearly limited.

Unlike the Michigan Civilian Conservation Corps (MCCC) and the Texas Conservation Corps (TCC), the Wisconsin Conservation Corps is not required to demonstrate its effectiveness in placing "graduates" in gainful employment. However, the WCC does

emphasize that the experience of the WCC will benefit corpsmembers by indicating to potential employers that the corpsmembers know how to work hard, work with others and be reliable. Toward the end of projects, crewleaders and sponsors often ask representatives of the local state employment office to speak to corpsmembers about resume development and job search strategies. However, these efforts are ad hoc and not a regular part of the program.

V. CORPSMEMBER CHARACTERISTICS

This chapter reviews data that describe some characteristics of WCC corpsmembers. The WCC collects and publishes relatively little data describing its corpsmembers. Analyses presented below are thus limited to gender and racial characteristics. Data are presented for the WCC at two points, October 1984 and August 1986, allowing some comparison of the changes that have occurred in corpsmember composition.

Table V.1 reports the basic demographic characteristics of WCC corpsmembers at the end of October 1984[4] and recent data as of August 1986. These data are divided between regular WCC corpsmembers and crewleaders.

Like many other conservation corps, the WCC has been more successful in attracting and hiring males than females. In 1984, about 26 percent of all regular crewmembers were female. This proportion rose slightly to 31 percent by 1986. The increase is due in part to increased efforts by the corps to seek out female recruits for initial crew positions and as replacements for crewmembers who leave the corps.

The WCC has had difficulty in finding female crewleaders. Only 11 percent of all crewleaders in 1984 were female. This proportion has remained the same despite efforts by the WCC to recruit female candidates.

WCC has been and remains predominately white having been 73 percent white in 1984 and 82 percent white in 1986. Given the rural, non-residential nature of the program and its location in a state with a minority population of 5.6 percent, the relative proportion of minority crewmembers is not surprising. Nevertheless, a quarter of crewmembers in the 1984 reporting period were from minority groups. However, overall minority representation had dropped from 27 to 18 percent by 1986. The decline can be attributed to the completion of several projects sited on reservations that had employed large numbers of American Indian youth and to the completion of several projects in urban areas that had employed a large share of black corpsmembers. The relative proportion of Hispanics enrolled in the WCC has remained constant at one or two percent during this time. The WCC encourages crewleaders and sponsors to target minority candidates to apply for positions. However, the demographic realities of the state coupled with the relatively few work sites in major urban areas makes this task difficult.

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[4] The date in the biennium when the greatest number of corpsmembers were enrolled.

TABLE V.1

Comparison of Demographic Characteristics of WCC Corpsmembers
(October 1984/August 1986)

	October 1984			August 1986		
	Total Corps (570)	Crewmembers (498)	Crew Leaders (72)	Total Corps (404)	Crewmembers (349)	Crew Leaders (55)
Sex						
Male	76%	74%	89%	70%	70%	89%
Female	24	26	11	30	30	11
Ethnicity/Race						
White	75%	73%	86%	84%	82%	94%
Minority	25	27	14	16	18	6
Asian	*	*	---	*	*	---
Hispanic	1	1	1	2	2	2
Black	7	7	4	3	3	---
American Indian	16	17	8	11	12	4

* less than 1 percent
--- 0

CONCLUSION

The population served by the WCC seems diverse with respect to race and gender given the characteristics of the population of the state. About 30 percent of corpsmembers are female. Minority representation in the corps has been as high as 27 percent but has recently declined to 18 percent due in great part to the completion of several large projects on reservations which had employed many Indian youth. Because relatively little data are collected on income and educational background, it is not possible to determine the extent to which the WCC serves youth who come from differing income and educational backgrounds.

VI. WCC COSTS

This chapter reviews the costs of the Wisconsin Conservation Corps. Since the WCC is funded biennially, all amounts reflect a two-year cycle of revenues and expenditures.

During its initial years, the WCC was funded directly from the state treasury, using the state's property tax revenues. In its initial biennial (1983-85) funding appropriation, the WCC received slightly over $5 million to develop and implement the program. Table VI.1 shows how these funds were spent during the period.[5]

Two-thirds of WCC expenditures went to crewmember wages and limited fringe benefits. Crewmembers are paid the federal minimum wage of $3.35/hour. Also included in these wage totals are assistant crewleader wages. Assistant Crewleaders are paid $3.85/hour during their first year in WCC or $4.25/hour if they are assistant crewleaders during a second year of service. The WCC also contributes the equivalent of two percent of crewmember wages towards the state's workers' compensation fund.

Administrative costs required about 26 percent of the WCC's expenditures during its first biennium. Crewleader wages accounted for the largest share of administrative costs, or about one-fifth of total expenditures. First-year crewleaders are paid $6.00/hour. Their wages are increased to $6.90/hour and $7.42/ per hour during their second and third years of service, respectively. Other administrative expenses were relatively low during this period. However, the hiring of new staff in the central office, anticipated raises for continuing crewleaders, some changes in accounting procedures and a decision by the Department of Natural Resources to directly charge the WCC for payroll services will raise total administrative expenses during the 1985-87 biennium from about 26 percent to slightly over 30 percent.

In its first biennial report, the WCC estimated that its average expenditure per crewmember per year was $7,814 during this period. For several reasons, this estimate should not be accepted as accurate reflection of the WCC's cost-per-slot. First, the WCC estimate assumes that all 570 slots were filled throughout the year. Thus, it underestimates the effects of attrition. Second, crewleaders are included in the 570 slots, also contributing to an underestimate of the average cost-per-

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[5] The expenditures reported here differ from those reported in the WCC Biennial Report because crewleader wages have been removed from the crewmember wage totals and listed as a separate administrative expense.

Table VI.1

Wisconsin Conservation Corps Expenditures and Revenues

(1983-85)

Expenditures		
Crewmember Expenses		
Wages	$3,005,072	67.6%
Scholarships[6]	39,246	0.8
Cash Bonuses	180,311	4.1
Project Support[7]	75,314	1.7
Corps Administration		
Crewleader Wages	897,720	20.2
Central Staff	189,534	4.3
Office Operations	37,265	0.8
Travel	21,991	0.5
Total Expenditures	$4,446,453	100.0%
Revenues		
State Conservation Fund	$5,004,000	
Federal Reimbursement for Disaster Assistance	7,870	
Total Revenues	$5,011,870	
Excess Over Expenditures[8]	$ 565,417	

[6] Scholarship funds (for tuition vouchers) are placed in escrow for use by corpsmembers during the three years following their year of service.

[7] Includes costs of producing corps newsletter, crewleader training, WCC signs, hard hats, hearing protectors, and handbooks.

[8] Under the initial legislation, appropriations balances reverted to the state at the end of the biennium. Under the state budget act for 1985-1987, WCC funds were changed from biennial to continuing, allowing the corps to retain balances for the subsequent biennium.

crewmember-slot. The WCC has supplied additional information that allows a computation of a cost-per-slot figure that adjusts for attrition and also removes crewleaders from total corpsmember strength.[9] The revised estimate of average cost-per-slot during the 1983/85 biennium was $10,537.

The WCC kept within its budget during its first two years of operation, ending with a surplus of more than $565,000. Because the WCC was initially funded by a special appropriation, this balance was seized by the state treasury at the end of the funding period. Subsequently, the WCC budget has been put on a continuing funding cycle and future surpluses, if they occur, will be carried over to the next funding cycle.

REVENUES

During the first biennium, the WCC was totally funded by state funds. However, there was an expectation that the corps would eventually generate its own revenue through cost-reimbursable projects. In the state budget bill for the 1985-87 biennium, the legislature established a target figure for program revenue to be raised by the WCC. The target for this two-year period is $1.6 million dollars or 30 percent of total WCC revenues. It was expected that the WCC would raise these revenues by contracting with organizations to do work that was, in part, reimburseable by state funds. However, these organizations are under no special mandate to use the WCC for their projects and, in fact, may be compelled by state law to use the cheapest bidder. Program operators believe that the program revenue target is unrealistic and expect that the WCC will be unable to raise a substantial portion of the projected amount. In fact, during the current

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[9] The WCC realized during the latter phases of its initial biennium that it would have a budget surplus. In an effort to reduce this surplus, it allowed several projects to continue their activities beyond the original year up to a maximum of three months' worth of work. The additional wages paid to crewmembers and crewleaders were equivalent to 16 crewmember years. The maximum number of crewmember and assistant crewmember slots during the period, adjusted for these additional crewmember years created by the project expansion, was 514. The WCC estimates that the maximum crewmembers wages (including assistant crewleaders) that would have been paid if all slots had been filled for the full year was $3,659,552. The WCC actually paid $3,005,072 to crewmembers and assistant crewleaders during the period. This is 82.1 percent of the maximum. By multiplying the maximum number of slots (514) by 82.1 percent, we can derive an accurate estimate of the average daily enrollment of the WCC during the period. The average daily enrollment for the WCC was 422. Total corps expenditures divided by this value yields an average cost-per-slot of $10,537.

1985-87 biennium only $50,000 of cost-reimbursable work has been awarded to the WCC.

CONCLUSION

The WCC operates with a substantial budget -- two-year revenues in excess of five million dollars. It reports low administrative costs relative to direct program expenses, but reported administrative expenses do not include supervisory costs and other program support activities. The average cost-per-slot during its first biennium was $10,537 which is lower than those of many other non-residential corps.

New funding from the state has not dramatically increased for the program's second biennium, and has, in fact, been decreased by the legislature's decision to require the WCC to raise 30 percent of its funding in program revenues through contract work. It is highly unlikely that the program will be able to achieve this level of 'outside' funding.

VII. LESSONS LEARNED AND CONTINUING ISSUES

The WCC is a new, exciting state youth corps that offers some important lessons to other corps and to states considering initiating their own programs. As a relatively new program, the WCC is still feeling its way on several important issues including youth development, expansion and funding beyond direct state appropriations. This concluding chapter considers these and other elements of the WCC model.

The WCC is highly decentralized and operates with a very small central administrative staff. As a non-residential program, it has relatively little day-to-day control over activities at the work sites and is heavily dependent upon the ability of its crewleaders and assistant crewleaders and upon the sponsors of work projects to ensure that productive work is being accomplished and corps procedures are being followed.

The WCC has several characteristics that distinguish it from other corps. Among them are its board of citizen volunteers which has been highly active in the program's development and operation. In addition, the WCC was created under very specific legislation that delineated the types of activities it would pursue and how many of these would be accomplished. This type of direction enabled the corps to become operational quickly and expand to its current size without much difficulty. Finally, the WCC has relatively few limitations on the types of youth it serves. Although only unemployed youth between 18 and 25 years of age are eligible, no additional requirements relating to educational achievement or family income circumscribe the pool of eligible candidates. The result is a corps that seems to serve a broad spectrum of youth.

The WCC has been quite successful in attracting quality work projects for its crews. Its close relationship with state and municipal agencies has been of great benefit. The corps has also been successful in choosing appropriate work projects from among applications submitted by public and non-profit work sponsors. The WCC has carefully established priorities to evaluate projects, and its adherence to these guidelines has allowed it to select good projects. Although additional concerns enter into the selection process, including geographic representation and the ability of the sponsor to meet program requirements, these additional factors have served to strengthen the overall selection process. The quality of work projects has not suffered as the corps has grown to its current size.

The WCC has also benefited in its planning and implementation from the examples set by other corps. It has adopted program components that were most suited to Wisconsin and to the needs and political realities of the state. In particular, the corps

has emphasized productive work as an important objective, has paid careful attention to public relations and communication with various constituencies, and has been willing to take advantage of opportunities to expand as they have appeared.

Because of its decentralized structure, the WCC has recognized the need to standardize the corps experience and to emphasize identification with the corps by corpsmembers, field staff and sponsors. Corpsmembers clearly understand their commitment to the WCC and its expectations. Although relatively mundane, things like WCC caps, shirts and newsletters support an identification with the WCC. Similarly, centralized training of crewleaders serves to underscore the spirit of the WCC among its critical field staff. The WCC also makes it clear that all corpsmembers are employees of the program and not employees of the sponsoring organization.

Finally, the WCC has generally attracted a set of sponsors who are attuned to the concept of the corps and the needs of its participants. The WCC has challenged them to employ corpsmembers effectively to complete important conservation work.

Potential problems continue on the horizon for the WCC. As a relatively small state entity, the WCC continues to be at risk as the state budget comes under closer fiscal scrutiny. To the extent that the WCC can identify and document its contributions to the state in all regions, it will be better able to meet this type of threat. However, the WCC's difficulty in placing crews in the populous southeastern section of the state may portend some difficulty in the future. In addition, the WCC has recently been requested to generate a substantial portion of its operating revenues through cost-reimbursable work. It is unclear how quickly and effectively the WCC can make this transition.

The WCC enters its fourth year of operation with some strong achievements to its credit. It has carved out an agenda for new initiatives that may strengthen the corps and make it more visible. Three specific items warrant attention: developing a residential camp for some corpsmembers, participating in a weatherization program for public buildings throughout the state, and implementing a youth development program to meet the needs of enrolled youth.

The expansion into a residential program could expand the range of opportunities for work and development available to the WCC. First, it could free the corps from total dependence upon local rural communities for its pool of applicants. Second, a residential facility might give the WCC considerably more control over corpsmembers in terms of discipline and training. Third, the establishment of a residential facility could enhance the ability of the corps to meet educational and other needs of youth

by increasing the types of "after-work" development activities that can be offered efficiently to residential corpsmembers.

The second major program development in which the WCC may become involved centers on a newly announced initiative by the governor. As part of this initiative, facilities and buildings used by the public -- libraries, community centers, museums -- would be weatherized. One likely and dependable source of labor for this part of the initiative is the WCC. Executive Secretary Brakken believes that to the extent that the WCC can establish itself as the primary deliverer of this service, demand for the WCC could be increased. He notes that other state and local corps have been involved in these type of activities with great success. Under a bill being considered by the legislature, funds allowing the WCC to hire an additional 30 crewmembers would be alloted for a Milwaukee-based program.

The third major agenda item of the WCC is the implementation of a more comprehensive youth development component within the program. The WCC has been able to establish some contacts with vocational technical institutes and the 13 campuses of the University of Wisconsin system in an effort to make their facilities and courses available to corpsmembers. However, the success of these efforts has been limited.

The WCC also faces a considerable challenge if it expands. With its modest central staff, the WCC is able to adequately oversee its current level of projects. However, rapid expansion could diminish the control that the Madison staff can wield over work sites and sponsors. The WCC runs a tremendous risk of becoming spread too thin if its future requires considerable expansion without corresponding growth in its central office. Some planning in terms of additional staff support has been done in preparation for expansion, but this planning is greatly contingent on final determination of the scope and growth of the WCC.

In sum, the WCC is a vibrant example of a youth corps operating at a state level. It has adopted many innovative and reasonable ideas to meet its objectives and serve both Wisconsin and its youth.

Appendix A

Wisconsin Conservation Corps Board
Conservation Project Priorities

Eligible Projects

Projects which provide long-term benefits to a large segment of the public; projects which satisfy and promote as many natural resource conservation activities as possible, such as wildlife, water, air, land, forestry, recreation, historical, etc.; projects which preserve, maintain, and enhance existing resources; and projects which increase the state's economic base through improvement of the resource.

Priority I

Projects include but are not limited to the following (not necessarily in order of priority):

- Improving accessability to recreation areas and facilities
- Fire breaks
- Wildlife cover planting
- Public water access development
- Improvements to conservation education facilities and areas
- Rehabilitation of existing recreation facilities
- Disaster assistance
- Trout stream rehabilitation
- Tree planting and site preparation
- Building removal and landscaping
- Fence construction
- Sign posting and boundary clearing and marking
- Wildlife opening maintenance and creation
- Vegetation control to enhance the resource
- Repair, maintenance of dikes, dams, park and forest roads, and parking lots, trails, etc.
- Erosion control measures
- Release and thinning of forests
- Energy conservation improvements
- Construction and development of new basic recreation areas and facilities

Priority II

Projects in this group include those which are routine and continuing or of short duration, low productivity or are of new, but not basic (elaborate) construction which will require the

continuous expenditure of new funds for maintenance. Included, but not limited to, are:

Painting and staining of buildings, signs, tables, etc.
Fish eradication projects in lakes and streams
Pruning pine plantations
Fuelwood production
Construction of elaborate recreation facilities

Ineligible Projects

Leaf raking, weed hoeing, lawn mowing, toilet maintenance, garbage pickup, and other similar non-productive tasks.

Public/Private Ventures

399 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106
(215) 592-9099

Youth Corps Profiles:

The Michigan Civilian Conservation Corps

by Phyllis Snyder
Sally Leiderman

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Michigan Civilian Conservation Corps (MCCC) was started in 1984 with two purposes: conservation of natural resources and provision of work experience for unemployed disadvantaged youth. Legislation that established the corps specified first that the MCCC was intended for "...conserving, improving and developing this state's natural resources and for enhancing, preserving and maintaining public lands and water through the employment of residents of this state in work training programs." The second intent was that the required work training programs "...provide work experience for certain residents of this state that will increase their likelihood of obtaining future employment."

The MCCC, a division of the state Department of Natural Resources, is a year-round program for 18- to 25-year-olds who receive General Assistance or Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC). It was begun as part of a larger effort to reduce the state's youth unemployment rate. The corps was initiated by Governor James Blanchard, whose primary goal in launching it was to reduce the public assistance population by providing work and training for employment.

The MCCC is funded for 500 full-time equivalent slots per year; in 1985, it enrolled 977 youth. At the time of P/PV's site visits, about 90 percent of these corpsmembers worked in non-residential settings scattered throughout forests, parks or lakefronts in rural areas. The remaining corpsmembers were enrolled in a residential camp in Oakland County, outside of Detroit. During 1986, the MCCC opened a second camp and has made plans to open a third.

The corps' name was chosen to evoke positive associations with the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s and to promote a focus on conservation work. At its founding, the MCCC had little in common with many of the current corps programs that include an emphasis on enhancing the personal development of corpsmembers and fostering esprit de corps, in addition to their focus on work experience. Other features that distinguish the MCCC are:

- The program serves public assistance recipients exclusively. Corps supervisors, as well as corpsmembers, are recipients of General Assistance and/or AFDC.
- Much of the work is accomplished by small crews, working in rural, non-residential sites.
- Administrative functions are managed by a small central staff, which also manages the central operations of the Michigan summer youth corps.

Substantial responsibility for the daily operation of the year-round corps rests with other divisions of the Department of Natural Resources.

- Its principal purpose is to provide work experience that increases participants' likelihood of finding unsubsidized employment.

- Youth development -- i.e., education and the inculcation of social values, is not an explicit goal of the program. However, it is the intent of the law establishing the MCCC that corpsmembers receive assistance in planning their futures.

The MCCC is included in P/PV's study of youth corps programs because it provides an example of a statewide corps that is highly prescriptive, both in the population that it serves and in the goal it seeks to accomplish. This profile describes the operation of the model.

The profile is based on a total of six days of site observations and interviews by two P/PV research officers during January 1986, and extensive review of program documents and materials. Quantitative data on participants and program costs come exclusively from the MCCC's records and were not verified by P/PV.

The remainder of this report is organized as follows:

- Chapter II describes the background and goals of the corps;

- Chapter III presents the program design;

- Chapter IV outlines the program's management structure;

- Chapter V reviews the program in action;

- Chapter VI describes participants;

- Chapter VII reviews costs; and

- Chapter VIII presents conclusions and lessons learned that might apply to other corps.

II. BACKGROUND AND GOALS

The Michigan Civilian Conservation Corps is one of a series of programs designed to reduce unemployment. Early in his administration, Governor James Blanchard had promised to enact a series of measures to reduce youth unemployment, a particularly serious problem for Michigan at that time. General unemployment in the state was about 17 percent; Flint, one of Michigan's most industrialized cities, had the highest unemployment rate in the nation; and youth unemployment was estimated at nearly 50 percent statewide.

After his inauguration in 1983, Governor Blanchard launched the Michigan Youth Corps (MYC), a summer program open to unemployed youth between the ages of 18 and 21. Its success in employing 25,000 youth in public sector jobs made it the largest corps in operation and encouraged Governor Blanchard to propose establishing a year-round corps.

The MCCC was enacted by the Legislature in March, 1984 in legislation sponsored by State Representative Thomas Mathieu, and became part of a statewide initiative called "Project Self-Reliance." According to MCCC staff, Project Self-Reliance was initiated to address fundamental questions about welfare dependence in a three-step process that (1) encouraged people on public assistance to apply for minimum wage, subsidized jobs and (2) once working, assisted them in improving their job performance so they could (3) move on to private sector jobs.

Within this framework, the MCCC was deliberately patterned after the old Civilian Conservation Corps. Because the MCCC was to be implemented against a backdrop of reduced state revenue -- brought about by the recession in the automotive and related industries -- and subsequent cuts in government services, Blanchard felt it was important that the corps be perceived both as a source of useful public work and as a means for getting people off the welfare rolls. Linking the MCCC and the CCC served to reinforce this public perception.

Initially, the MCCC was funded with $2.6 million for the last six months of FY 83-84; the legislature later appropriated $5.2 million for the corps' first full fiscal year, FY 84-85. Although the legislation authorizing the MCCC provided that the corps stand for renewal after December 1985, that provision was ruled invalid by the Michigan Attorney General and resulted in the MCCC becoming a permanent program of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Since that time, MCCC funding is authorized annually.

GOALS

The program's two goals are succinct: to perform useful conservation work on state lands and waters, and to provide work experience that will assist corpsmembers in obtaining future employment.

The MCCC attempts to meet its conservation goal through projects developed by DNR. Most of the conservation work performed by corpsmembers calls for unskilled labor, such as clearing brush, painting and storing park equipment. These projects provide participants with work experience, and therefore partially meet the second goal. But the MCCC recently began experimenting with work projects that help participants develop specific skills -- including roofing, vehicle maintenance and lumber work -- with the hope that these skills will better enable corpsmembers to find post-program jobs.

III. PROGRAM DESIGN

The MCCC is a work-oriented program. It enrolls about 1,000 youth per year to fill 500 corpsmember slots. The only stated enrollment criteria are that corpsmembers must be between the ages of 18 and 25, unemployed and receiving either General Assistance or AFDC when they apply.

Corpsmembers are paid the minimum wage for 40 hours of work each week.[1] Each corpsmember may be paid for up to 2,080 hours per year -- about one calendar year of work. Cash benefits from General Assistance are stopped, but corpsmembers are allowed to keep their medical benefits.

Except for some corpsmembers employed in the Lansing headquarters of the MCCC, corpsmembers perform physical work. Approximately 85 percent of the corps works in the 130 rural, and often isolated, work sites scattered throughout state lands managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Seventy percent of the sites employ corpsmembers for crews of five or six workers, and the other 30 percent employ one or two corpsmembers to work at individual tasks.

MCCC crews are led by corps supervisors, who are General Assistance recipients over the age of 25 and who have had more work experience. Corps supervisors report directly to a professional-level staff member of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

NATURE OF PROJECTS

MCCC projects consist of additions and enhancements to DNR land. Corpsmembers maintain trails, plant shrubs and trees, and assist in erosion control. Visitor centers, lakefront accesses, a CCC museum and roadside facilities are examples of projects that the MCCC accomplished that DNR would not otherwise be able to fund.

The MCCC provides more than just corpsmember labor for these projects. Each site receives administrative funds equal to 15 percent of the wages of corpsmembers assigned to the project. These funds are used to purchase materials, equipment and supplies for work projects.

The corpsmembers' labor and the administrative funds' contribution cannot be underestimated. Most of Michigan's northern lower peninsula and all of the upper peninsula are parks, forest, lakes

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[1] The MCCC now has an intermediate pay range of $4.40 per hour that is paid to corpsmembers who serve as assistant supervisors or who assume additional responsibilities.

and farmland; much of the responsibility for maintaining these lands falls to the DNR. State budget restrictions over several years had caused much work to be postponed, and only basic maintenance was performed. According to DNR staff, the MCCC's administrative funds' contribution has allowed DNR to perform long-overdue tasks that have helped to increase the use of state parks and generate additional tourist revenue in the surrounding areas.

IV. MANAGEMENT

With a central staff of four, 130 work sites throughout the state, and some of its operations conducted by other state agencies, the MCCC is a highly decentralized program. This chapter describes how the program is managed.

CENTRAL STAFF

The MCCC central staff is responsible for preparing the annual budget and overseeing costs, working with regional directors to develop projects, monitoring whether slots are filled, work is done, and the administrative funds are paid out, developing special statewide projects, and public relations on behalf of the corps. Although central staff members have separate titles, it appears that they work as a team, with interchangeable assignments. In addition to these responsibilities, two members of the MCCC staff devote a substantial amount of time to the administration of the Michigan Youth Corps (MYC), the summer youth corps. The four full-time staff members are occasionally assisted by one or two temporary employees hired as corpsmember specialists.

Full-time central staff consists of Tim Ervin, Chief, Michigan Civilian Conservation Corps, who is an employee of both DNR and the state's Department of Labor, and his associates, Ross Dodge and Steven Philip. Ervin had prior experience in state government and administration and he has been an effective advocate of the MCCC both within government and with the public. Dodge and Philip were recruited from DNR staff; both have experience operating work programs for youth. Karen Stratton, the fourth member of the central staff, is a part-time employee who had worked as a supervisor in the MYC. She was hired to monitor both MCCC and MYC work sites and to provide guidance and technical assistance where necessary.

FIELD STAFF

Field work is supervised by employees of the DNR who oversee all MCCC corps supervisors.

DNR Staff

The primary responsibility for site work is carried by DNR field staff who report through a chain of command to three regional directors for the DNR, and not directly to the MCCC. Instead, the MCCC relies upon the judgment of staff in the field to identify work projects which will produce the greatest conservation benefits. The MCCC office has final approval of all projects and works through the DNR field staff chain of command to establish program priorities and resolve issues. If conflict should occur, resolution would be handled by the director of the

Department of Natural Resources, who oversees both the field operations and the MCCC program staff.

There are advantages and disadvantages to this arrangement. An advantage is that the MCCC's administrative cost in its own budget is very low. Little money is required for administrative or other central expenses; the bulk of management and administrative costs appear in DNR's budget. The disadvantage is that because the MCCC does not pay staff in the 130 sites, it does not have direct control over productivity. Moreover, MCCC has been reluctant to ask DNR staff to deliver services beyond work project supervision, including training. Although every site has been inspected each year since the program began, problems of control develop because the sites are so widely scattered; central staff described the problems of inspecting them, and of helping corpsmembers to feel connected to a larger entity. As a response to this problem, in the fall of 1985 the MCCC hired one person in a corpsmember specialist slot to visit sites on a regular basis. During the summers, four youth corps participants are hired to monitor MCCC and MYC work sites.

Responsibilities of DNR staff who supervise MCCC projects are substantial. They include proposing work projects, contacting the local welfare office for referrals, interviewing and selecting corpsmembers, supervising their work, acting as mentors or role models for the corpsmembers, and carrying out any training that is done. DNR staff take on all of these responsibilities for the MCCC in addition to their regular work. Moreover, some exert considerable personal influence on corpsmembers. Corpsmembers frequently develop strong feelings of loyalty to individual DNR staff.

DNR field staff are also responsible for enforcing the corps' rules, but enforcement is often lenient. For example, according to regulations spelled out in the 1985 Corpsmember Handbook, "Frequent tardiness will result in disciplinary action and/or permanent dismissal... three days of unapproved absence will result in your termination." DNR staff member interviewed by P/PV staff reported that these were not hard and fast rules; most were sympathetic to the number of problems faced by the corpsmembers, ranging from car problems to court appearances, and tended to bend the regulations to permit corpsmembers to continue. However, some DNR staff expressed displeasure with corpsmembers' attendance and work habits despite their reluctance to fire them.

Corps Supervisors

In about 70 percent of the sites, corpsmembers work in crews and are supervised by a corps supervisor. Corps supervisors, like corpsmembers, must be receiving public assistance benefits when they apply to the MCCC, but do not have to meet the same age restrictions. Their job is to ensure safety, see that the work

gets done, and carry out the orders of the DNR staff member. DNR staff member seek to hire corps supervisors with experience since no centralized training for corps supervisors is provided by the MCCC; they are paid $5.46 per hour -- more than the minimum wage salaries of the corpsmembers -- for 40 hours a week. In the remaining 30 percent of sites, corpsmembers work alone or in pairs under the direct supervision of DNR staff.

Corps supervisors are generally older (between 30 and 40 years of age) than corpsmembers and have more work experience. They may or may not have had any previous experience doing conservation work or working with youth. Because of the severe recession in Michigan's economy and the dearth of other local jobs, however, the quality of corps supervisors is better than most DNR staff had imagined would be the case when the program was first proposed.

Corps supervisors are also limited to one year in the corps and are encouraged to find a permanent job during their tenure. The one-year limit for corps supervisors frequently poses a problem for DNR staff who may spend time training supervisors in supervisory skills at the work site and are then reluctant to lose them. P/PV observed more variation in the quality of crew supervision in the MCCC than in corps where work supervisors hold permanent staff positions. This will be described more fully in the next chapter.

Corpsmembers can be promoted to corps supervisor positions. However, if a corpsmember is promoted, he or she still must leave the MCCC after one year. DNR staff say the one-year limit makes it hard to justify a promotion, since by the time a corpsmember is sufficiently mature and skilled, he or she is usually near the end of the tenure. DNR staff feel it is less disruptive in these instances simply to hire a new supervisor from outside the crew ranks.

In summary, the MCCC is a relatively large corps run by a very small central staff. Its operations rely on the efforts of field staff of the DNR. Use of DNR has reduced the corps' direct costs since the expense of daily supervision is absorbed within the general DNR budget. However, our observation suggests that the absence of MCCC staff at the non-residential sites has made it difficult for the MCCC to monitor the quality of the work, deliver formal and informal educational or placement services, or develop a program identity. Central staff appear to be doing a great deal of work, with little time left over for monitoring sites or planning for fine-tuning corps operations. This suggests that the corps should consider the extent to which it can exercise greater control over more of its operations -- by adding residential camps (as is being planned), instituting training programs for both DNR staff and non-residential corps-

members, and planning regional events.[2] The MCCC might also review staff assignments and consider whether additional central staff could be funded.

[2] Two residential facilities have been added since P/PV's visit. In addition, a new educational component that provides four hours of employability skills training weekly is being tried on a pilot basis at ten work sites. Staff from local educational institutions deliver the training.

V. THE CORPS IN ACTION

This chapter describes how corpsmembers in the MCCC spend their days -- the type of work they do, how they are supervised, and how educational and job placement resources affect their experience. It concludes with a description of the Proud Lake Camp, the only residential facility operating during 1985.

DEVELOPMENT OF WORK PROJECTS

Work projects are developed at the local level; park managers or other supervisory employees within DNR submit proposals requesting slots for MCCC workers to their DNR regional directors. The three DNR regions have, in turn, been allocated a portion of the total corpsmember slots by central staff. Directors review proposals from their regions, and respond based on assessments of individual site's needs and ability to enroll corpsmembers. The MCCC office gives final approval. The sites' success in filling corpsmember openings in prior years is evidently an important consideration. Three-quarters of the current projects are repeat projects that have employed corpsmembers since the program began.

Examples of the types of conservation work corpsmembers can expect to perform include clearing brush for new trails, litter removal, digging recreational lakes and ponds, tree planting and cutting, and aiding in times of natural disasters. The majority of jobs are entry-level and corpsmembers generally do not gain specific job skills.

The nature of the work and the program's organization likely match the expectations of entering corpsmembers. Since corpsmembers are recruited through state public assistance offices, the corps represents for them a chance to get off public assistance and obtain 12 months of work at minimum wage. The majority of jobs are entry level. The emphasis of the work experience is on learning work fundamentals, such as punctuality, discipline, teamwork and taking direction from supervisors. While some MCCC work experiences provide specific job skills (e.g., roofing, data processing, landscaping, and others), most of the jobs involve corpsmembers in a wide variety of work situations, tailored to meet the needs of DNR facilities and lands.

CORPSMEMBER DAY

The structure of a corpsmember's day reflects the emphasis on work experience. Unlike a number of other conservation and youth corps that begin the day with exercises and allow time for

education and other youth development activities during the day, the MCCC structures the day to be as much like a job as possible.

In the 1985 MCCC Corpsmember Handbook, corpsmembers are told:

> "You are expected to report to work on time and work hard. You are expected to work well with your fellow corpsmembers and DNR staff and be courteous to the public. The MCCC program is supported by the tax dollars of Michigan's citizens. It is essential that corpsmembers maintain a positive image both on and off the work site."

This passage conveys the values the MCCC seeks to instill in corpsmembers: good work habits and appropriate behavior. Although getting to work regularly and on time is a basic lesson that the MCCC seeks to promote and enforce among the corpsmembers, site location frequently poses an obstacle.[3] Commuting to sites requires travel by car which frequently takes up to an hour each way.

Once they arrive at the site, corpsmembers work a full day. They are paid minimum wage, but are not eligible for paid holidays or paid annual leave because their employee classification does not entitle them to benefits under Michigan law. A number of corpsmembers expressed dissatisfaction at the lack of paid holidays, since they felt that they did the same work as full-time employees who were entitled to benefits.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The corps will assist corpsmembers with financial support but does not include provision of educational or development activities as part of its mission. The MCCC will pay 50 percent of the cost of courses that corpsmembers take while they are in the corps and, at the residential camp, will provide transportation to local classes. However, youth development in the MCCC revolves around the work ethic; development supports the overall corps goal of preparing participants to find permanent employment in the private sector.

Transition services -- job search activities -- are built into the program and include a combination of activities, some provided on site by the corps, others left to individual responsibility. When the program began, primary responsibility for finding jobs rested with the corpsmembers themselves. The Corpsmember Handbook lists a number of steps that participants are either urged or required to take in order to find jobs -- including registering with the Michigan Employment Security

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[3] In late 1986, the Department of Social Services agreed to provide funding to help address continuing transportation problems.

Commission (MESC), completing a skills inventory, using the Michigan Occupational Information System (MOIS) to obtain information about occupational areas of interest, and taking civil service examinations.

DNR staff members were also expected to play a role in the delivery of transition services to corpsmembers by evaluating work performance, assisting in preparation of resumes, and providing general job counseling. However, the MCCC provides no training or orientation to prepare DNR staff and park managers for these responsibilities. The DNR staff members' work load usually does not allow time to pursue job development activities with corpsmembers. Many of the sites have a lighter work load during the winter -- when snow makes it difficult to complete much of the outdoor work -- but, even then, some supervisors interviewed said they did not use the time to pursue any type of training with the corpsmembers. Other supervisors do help corpsmembers identify sources of assistance with job search.

Since corpsmembers from early program cycles have had difficulty locating jobs, program administrators recognized the need to provide more active assistance to participants to equip them with job search skills. They chose a job search program developed by the National Guard that had been successful for people completing their service in the Guard. The standardized program, which includes films and oral presentations, is brought to all corps-members at central locations throughout the state.

RESIDENTIAL CAMP

Michigan's Civilian Conservation Corps currently includes two residential camps, and a third is being planned. Expansion of the residential option reflects the central staff's desire to serve urban minority youth who do not live within commuting distance of non-residential sites. The expansion is also due to central staff's recognition that the inclusion of more educa-tional and development options in the corps may strengthen the corpsmembers' ability to find and retain a job. It has proven easier to include these options at the residential camps.

Corpsmembers at the existing residential camp say they feel special since they have been interviewed individually and then "selected" by the camp director. The problems of transportation and attendance that persist at many of the work sites are not an issue when the corpsmembers live at the camp and are provided with transportation to the work site.

Proud Lake, the only residential camp in operation during P/PV's visit, can accommodate up to 50 corpsmembers, although it averages about 43 corpsmembers in residence. This facility was owned by DNR, and has been renovated to accommodate the corpsmem-bers. Corpsmembers share rooms in dormitory-like buildings that

are cleaned and maintained by participants as one of their work assignments. Corpsmembers are required to pay four dollars per day to cover the cost of room and board,a practice also true in the California and Texas Conservation Corps. Meals are eaten together in the cafeteria where the park manager and the DNR staff members frequently eat as well. The cafeteria is open for snacks at night and serves as a place for everyone to meet and chat, although a lounge is also available. Each day begins and ends with a gathering of all corpsmembers for announcements and mail.

In addition to the crew that works at the camp doing cleaning and general maintenance, there are a number of other crews at the camp, many of which travel to work at nearby sites. Two crews repair vehicles and do roofing work. Corpsmembers in these crews learn skills that serve them during the time that they are working at Proud Lake, and that transfer to other jobs. The quality of the work experience at Proud Lake is also enhanced by the careful selection and training of corps supervisors.

Richard Hill, the park manager, spends close to 40 percent of his time on recruitment of both corps supervisors and corpsmembers at Department of Social Services (DSS) offices. He seeks supervisors with experience in the job-specific skills needed by camp crews. Once corps supervisors are hired, he specifically trains them in the supervisory skills they will need in their new MCCC jobs.

Sharing living quarters and meals has given corpsmembers a sense of being part of a corps, a sense that was not apparent in other work sites visited. Removed from their communities and homes, corpsmembers have formed new friendships and ties among themselves. Several indicated plans to share apartments after they left the corps. Although some of the older corpsmembers had lived away from home before coming to the camp, the opportunity to live semi-independently and to hold a job was new to many. This experience could be beneficial in broadening their job search horizons by fostering a willingness to search for a job away from home.

The camp provides participants with more of a support structure than does a non-residential assignment. Not only are the corpsmembers together outside of working hours, but they also have more opportunities to discuss questions, problems or interests with staff and supervisors. However, DNR staff members working at Proud Lake are not chosen specifically for their interest or qualifications to work with the corps. With the exception of Hill, who sought the position of park manager knowing that it entailed supervision of the residential camp, the other DNR staff members had not chosen to work at a park that was a corps site.

An additional advantage of the residential camp is the opportunity it affords to promote education and development for corpsmembers. Proud Lake does not offer classes on site, but provides transportation to evening classes at local high schools, and to nearby Alcoholics Anonymous meetings or clinics providing birth control information and health services.

Youth who have not graduated from high school are required to attend GED preparation classes. DNR staff members monitor attendance, but no sanctions are imposed if corpsmembers do not attend. Even the financial incentive provided by the corps -- reimbursement of 50 percent of the cost of courses -- does not seem sufficient to motivate continued attendance.

The emphasis on work in the MCCC may deter corpsmembers' efforts to continue their education. Classes are only available in the evening after corpsmembers have worked all day, and corpsmembers are encouraged to take their 10 available free days to search for employment. Although the link between a diploma and a better job may be mentioned, corpsmembers are pushed harder to find a job than to get more education.

VI. PARTICIPANTS

This section will describe briefly how corpsmembers are recruited, the characteristics of those who enroll, how long corpsmembers stay, and their outcomes at separation. Information presented in this section is based on the MCCC program records for 1985; P/PV did not independently verify these data.

During its first complete year of operation, the corps was funded for 500 full-time equivalent slots of 2,080 hours each. In order to reach this goal, staff established approximately 700 positions at 131 work sites. The number of positions is greater than the number of slots since some portion of the 500 slots will be vacant during the year while new corpsmembers are being recruited; the extra positions allow the corps to fill 500 full-time equivalent slots and to spend its full budgetary allotment. During 1985, 977 corpsmembers were enrolled in these positions. Duration of enrollment ranged from one day to the maximum of one year.

RECRUITMENT

When the MCCC began, all recruitment was done through the 80 local offices of the Michigan Department of Social Services (DSS). At that time anyone accepted for the corps had to be certified as unemployed and receiving General Assistance, and local offices therefore seemed the best place to locate this function. However, the caseload at these offices is large, and local DSS staff had not been well informed about the corps. Also, they did not regard the program as a high quality placement since it offered work that was not permanent, paid minimum wage and developed few marketable skills. An evaluation of the program done by MCCC staff at the conclusion of the first nine months highlighted recruitment as the major problem during the start-up period.

Early recruitment problems led to a widening of the recruitment effort to capture a higher percentage of unemployed 18- to 25-year-olds. Several changes have been made as a result, although the corps remains under-enrolled. Michigan Employment Security Offices (MESC) and Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) have also been asked to recruit participants for the corps. Although the MESC and SDAs contributed only 10 percent of the total enrollment in early 1986, corps administrators expect that more youths will be referred by them in the future since referrals will count as placements for them. Another change implemented to increase the pool of eligible recruits was to include recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). The administrative offices in Lansing also prepared videos, brochures and recruitment posters to increase the program's visibility throughout the state.

Corpsmembers are hired by DNR site managers, who have occasionally had prior experience operating programs like MCCC. Some managers expressed frustration at hiring corpsmembers through local DSS offices. Hill, the manager of the Proud Lake Camp, travels widely to recruit from urban and rural areas that are not within commuting distance of non-residential corps sites. Hill travels to DSS offices to make presentations to groups of prospective corpsmembers assembled by the local caseworkers, interviewing those who remain interested after the presentation. He has made the decision to spend 40 percent of his time recruiting both participants and supervisors because he believes that attitudes and expectations influence the quality of the corps experience, and are especially important to the experience in a residential setting.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

In 1985, about three-fourths of MCCC corpsmembers (76%) were male, the other fourth (24%) were female. This proportion is about the same as that for other corps that do primarily physical and conservation work; since this work is considered non-traditional employment for women, fewer women tend to apply. Women comprise about 30 percent of corpsmembers in the San Francisco Conservation Corps; they account about 24 percent of enrollees in the California Conservation Corps and 20 percent in the Texas Conservation Corps.

Eighty-six percent of MCCC enrollees are white; 11 percent are black; 2 percent are Hispanic and 1 percent report that they come from some other racial/ethnic background. According to 1980 Census data, 37 percent of Michigan's general assistance population between the ages of 16 and 24 is black or Hispanic, and it appears that minority youth are not being served in proportion to their representation in Michigan's unemployed youth population.

MCCC staff believe that so few minority youth are served because the corps' non-residential work sites are primarily in areas of the state where the population is predominantly white. If this is true, it may be appropriate for the MCCC to consider increasing the number of residential centers so that enrollment will be less dependent upon the demographics of the areas surrounding its work sites, or consider developing more urban sites that would presumably attract more minority youth.

Thirty-nine percent of corpsmembers in 1985 had not graduated from high school at the time they entered the MCCC. About half (47%) had completed only high school; the remaining 14 percent reported that they had also attended at least one year of college. The proportion of corpsmembers who reported they had attended college is high compared to other corps, and higher than one might expect given that enrollment in the MCCC is restricted to people who receive General Assistance or AFDC at the time they

apply. There are at least two reasons for this. First, Michigan has a very inexpensive and widespread state college system; many youth leaving high school go on to take some college courses. Second, Michigan has had a recession in recent years. According to staff, the statewide recession combined with the paucity of jobs in areas surrounding state parks has meant that many high school graduates, as well as those who have completed some college courses, find themselves collecting General Assistance.

PLACEMENT

Although placement is a goal for the MCCC, it creates some dilemmas. Because the program is largely non-residential, and nearly all of the work sites are at state parks, it attracts many youth living in rural areas where there are few entry-level jobs. Those jobs that do exist are generally low-paying seasonal employment in tourist-related occupations (e.g. waitresses, hotel workers, cashiers, etc.). For many youth, the MCCC is the best job they are likely to find; thus, they are reluctant to leave. Those that do leave sometimes find they have to move in order to get another job.

In addition, the DNR, like other state agencies, has had its entry-level jobs frozen for several years, and corpsmembers have become one of the few sources of entry-level labor for the department. Turnover places a burden on DNR site staff. They must continually replace and train new workers and adjust to new personalities and skills, while being held accountable for seeing that work gets done. All of these factors act as a disincentive for both corpsmembers and DNR staff members to plan for post-corps employment and encourage corpsmembers to stay rather than to look for work before their year is over.

As was noted earlier, the corps enrolled 977 corpsmembers in 1985. The average length of stay, according to program records, was five to six months. Staff report that 20 percent of all corpsmembers leave within one month of joining. Statistics show that program stay depends primarily on the availability of jobs in the area and length of stay is longer in areas where alternative employment is scarce.

The corps keeps some records on why corpsmembers leave, but it has only recently begun doing this for all corpsmembers. In an effort to estimate the corps' placement rate, an MCCC staff member checked the DSS records of all former corpsmembers. Assuming that all those who no longer received public assistance must be working, the staff added this figure to the total number of corpsmembers who had reported a job as their reason for leaving the MCCC, and calculated an estimated placement rate of 60 percent. However, the corps' assumption did not take into account the range of reasons that could explain why someone no longer received General Assistance or AFDC. In addition to

employment, the reasons included moving, marriage, and entering another training program. Because of the informality of this estimate and P/PV's inability to verify it, this figure is reported with considerable caution.

VII. FUNDS AND COSTS

The MCCC receives all of its funds from general revenues of the State of Michigan. Funding levels are set by the State Legislature each year. For the past four years, the corps' re-funding has shown slight increments each year. Most of these increments were for cost-of-living adjustments. The levels of funding for each year since the corps began operation are shown below.

Table VII.1

Levels of Funding

FY 1983-84 (March - Sept.)	$2,600,000
FY 1984-85	$5,200,000
FY 1985-86	$5,403,900
FY 1986-87	$5,417,600

The budget for FY 85-86 is displayed in Table VII.2. A comparison of costs for the residential and non-residential programs is shown in Table VII.3; Table VII.4 presents costs-per-corpsmember slot broken down in a number of ways. All of these tables are based on the costs for the fiscal year that were projected in October 1985. Many of these costs -- for staff salaries, special projects and administration -- are fixed so that projected and actual expenditures should be the same. Costs for corpsmember and supervisor compensation and for the administrative funds are a fixed rate, but are applied to a changing number of slots.

Because FY 85-86 was the only year for which detailed program information was available, we chose to base calculations on these figures. Since the actual number of corpsmembers and supervisors who will be involved cannot be known until the end of the fiscal year, these are estimated. As of May, however, staff reported that actual expenditures were running very close to these projections, except where noted in the table.

The MCCC spends about 61 percent of its funds on direct compensation of crew corpsmembers and another 16 percent on direct compensation of supervisors. In the MCCC, supervisors, like corpsmembers, are hired for specific projects, may not stay longer than one year, and must be receiving public assistance when they apply to the corps. Thus, one could make the case that supervisors are a special kind of corpsmember, analogous to the corps supervisor or corpsmember specialist position common to other youth corps. This allows us to classify supervisors' wages either as a transfer payment, like corpsmembers' wages, or as an administrative expense. Hence, they are treated separately in this discussion.

Another 12 percent of the total corps budget is spent on the administrative funds (based on 15 percent of corpsmembers and

supervisors wages) for project materials and supplies. Only 11 percent is spent on all other operating expenses, including staff salaries and the costs of running the residential program. As noted, however, the services of DNR field staff do appear in the DNR budget.

Table VII.3 compares the budgeted costs of the residential and non-residential programs for FY 85-86. For purposes of this comparison, each was allocated a pro-rated share of central staff salaries and administrative costs, based on the total number of corpsmembers (536 non-residential and 36 residential) and corps supervisors (81 non-residential and 11 residential) budgeted for the year.

Sixty-five percent of the non-residential budget is allocated to corpsmembers wages; 16 percent for supervisor compensation; 12 percent for project materials and supplies, and the remaining 7 percent for other administrative costs. Not surprisingly, the proportion of the residential budget allocated to administrative expenses is higher, at 42 percent, than the 5 percent of the non-residential budget allocated for these expenses. Salaries of camp staff as well as room and board for corpsmembers and supervisors, and their non-work activities account for much of this difference.

Thirty-four percent of the residential budget goes towards corpsmembers wages; although residential and non-residential corpsmembers are paid at the same rate, the lower proportion of the budget expended for corpsmember compensation reflects the smaller number of residential slots and the additional expenses of operating the camp.

Table VII.4 looks at the projected cost-per-slot in a number of ways. Overall, the cost-per-corpsmember-slot for FY 85-86 is projected as $10,679. This is the total program cost of $6,108,344 divided by the total number of annual slots (572) used to develop this budget.[4] Deviation from the projected number of slots filled could cause the cost-per-slot to differ either slightly or substantially.

The cost-per-slot for corpsmembers in the non-residential program is $10,084. Direct payments to corpsmembers accounts for about two-thirds of this cost; program expenses, including payments to supervisors, account for the other third. The cost-per-slot for other corps (both residential and non-residential) studied by P/PV ranges from $13,900 to $19,000. However, MCCC cost-per-slot is most comparable to that of the Wisconsin Conservation Corps, which is also a statewide, non-residential corps. Its cost-per-

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[4] In FY 85-86, MCCC based its costs on serving 1000 youth across 572 crew positions. They assume that because of the time it takes to fill vacancies, these 572 crew positions will yield 500 full-time equivalent slots over a year.

Table VII.2

MCCC Budget for FY 1985-86

	Amount Budgeted	Percent of Total
Labor Expenses		
Corpsmember Compensation 572 slots @$3.35 per hour for 1960 hours*	$3,755,752	61%
Supervisor Compensation 92 slots @$5.46 per hour for 1960 hours*	984,547	16
Staff salaries		
Headquarters staff	235,900	4
Residential camp staff	92,100	2
Operating Expenses		
Fifteen percent administrative funds for materials and and supplies	711,045	12
Residential camp administration	181,900	3
Central staff administration	74,100	1
Special projects - materials and supplies	73,000	1
TOTAL FY 1985-1986 budget**	$6,108,344	100%
Funding for FY 1985-1986	$5,403,900	

*1960 hours is used to calculate compensation rather than 2080 hours because corpsmembers and crew supervisors are not paid for holidays.

**The FY 1985-1986 budget also included $521,500 for a second residential camp. As of May 1986, the camp had not yet opened, although senior staff had been hired. These monies were omitted from this chart because the actual costs this fiscal year will reflect only a few months of operation, and will likely vary widely from the budgeted amount.

Table VII.3

Comparison of Non-residential and Residential Costs

	Non-residential	Percent of Total	Residential	Percent of Total
Corpsmember compensation	$3,519,376	65%	$236,376	34%
Supervisor compensation	866,829	16	117,718	17
Staff salaries				
Pro-rated share of:				
central staff	219,387	4	16,513	2
residential staff	--	--	92,100	13
Operating Expenses				
Administrative funds for materials and supplies	657,931	12	53,114	7
Special projects	73,000	2	--	--
Central staff administration (pro-rated share)	68,913	1	5,187	1
Residential camp administration	--	--	181,900	26
TOTAL COSTS	$5,405,436	100%	$702,908	100%

Table VII.4

MCCC Cost-Per-Slot Estimates

	Cost-Per-Slot	Administrative Costs	Labor Costs
A. Cost-per-slot Including Corps Supervisor Wages as Administrative Costs			
All corpsmembers (572)	$10,679	$ 4,113	$ 6,566
Non-residential corpsmembers (536)	$10,084	$ 3,518	$ 6,566
Residential corpsmembers (36)	$19,525	$12,959	$ 6,566
B. Cost-per-slot Including Corps Supervisor Wages as Labor Cost			
All (572 corpsmembers and 92 supervisors)	$ 9,199	$ 2,060	$ 7,139
Non-residential (536 corpsmembers and 81 supervisors)	$ 9,378	$ 2,269	$ 7,109
Residential (36 corpsmembers and 11 supervisors)	$15,975	$ 8,441	$ 7,534

slot is approximately $10,500. In the MCCC, field costs are absorbed in the operating budgets of other DNR divisions, and few services beyond work experience are provided.

The residential program is much more expensive; cost-per-slot is $19,525. This cost is similar to or higher than the cost-per-slot for other residential programs that also pay wages. An important reason is that the residential program is small; the fact that the entire residential infrastructure is necessary to serve only a few corpsmembers allows no economies of scale. With the opening of additional residential facilities, the cost-per-slot should decrease.

It was argued earlier that corps supervisors could be considered as more highly paid corpsmembers, rather than staff of the MCCC, since they are also required to be receiving public assistance and can remain in the corps for a maximum of one year. Also, the number of supervisors assigned to a work site is added to the number of corpsmembers there to calculate the funding sites receive for materials and supplies. For this reason, it seems appropriate to examine the cost-per-slot combining corpsmember and supervisor slots. This adjustment is shown in the bottom half of Table VII.4; it reduces the cost-per-slot somewhat since the costs are divided among a larger number of slots. This effect is greater for the non-residential cost-per-slot, since the ratio of corpsmember to supervisor slots is much lower for the residential program.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The Michigan Civilian Conservation Corps has made significant progress toward achieving its initial goals. First, the MCCC has performed useful conservation work on state lands. Improvements and maintenance on state parks, forests and lakefronts have been accomplished that could not have been afforded without MCCC labor and resources. In addition, the corps has employed more than 900 young welfare recipients and given them work experience. MCCC data suggest that many participants have found employment after leaving the program; however, more research is necessary to verify this finding.

The remainder of this chapter provides a summary of our observations and conclusions which may be helpful lessons to other corps, or to designers of new employment and training initiatives for disadvantaged youth.

1. The rapid start-up of the MCCC was greatly facilitated by operating it through the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Operating under the umbrella of the DNR also enabled the MCCC to rely on existing staff for supervision of corpsmembers and to benefit from the prestige associated with working for DNR in Michigan.

2. The incentives offered to DNR by the MCCC -- paid labor, funds to cover the cost of materials, and the capacity to accomplish tasks otherwise neglected -- have encouraged DNR to hire corpsmembers.

3. The decentralized nature of the MCCC, and specifically the use of DNR field staff to supervise corpsmembers at sites, limits the ability of the central staff to monitor corpsmembers' productivity and quality of work.

4. DNR staff members and corps supervisors receive limited training in the goals of the corps. This has resulted in considerable variation in the way corpsmembers are supervised.

5. The rural location of non-residential work sites limits the corps' ability to recruit youth, and in particular, to serve minority youth who are underserved proportionate to their composition of the disadvantaged population.

6. Prior to the recent institution of a new employability component, the MCCC offered little in the way of education, specific skill training, or other youth development activities. A single day of instruction in job search skills is presented by the Michigan National Guard.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. A corps that relies on the resources of an existing agency can begin operations quickly and can be managed by a lean central staff. However, such an arrangement diminishes the level of control that the corps can exercise over the quality of corpsmembers' work and the enforcement of rules.

2. Programs that seek to recruit and serve only low-income or difficult-to-employ youth, rather than youth from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds, can attract and retain these youth and accomplish needed work on public lands. The extent to which these youth find and retain subsequent employment should be the subject of further research.

3. Statewide programs with a rural, non-residential design may have to make special efforts to serve all demographic groups of targeted youth, particularly urban minority youth. Programs can reach these youth by adding residential camps and by locating work projects in urban areas.

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Youth Corps Profiles:

The Texas Conservation Corps

by Sheila Rosenblum

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Texas Conservation Corps (TCC) is a collaborative venture of the public and private sectors, administered by the Texas Education Foundation. A private not-for-profit organization, it targets youth, ages 18-21, who are eligible for service under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA).

The long-term objective of the TCC is to help youth become employable. Specifically, the program provides education and job training through closely supervised, disciplined work experiences. As stated in the TCC proposal, the program philosophy is based on two premises:

- The way to learn how to work hard is to do hard work.
- Hard work can teach a great deal and can build self-confidence and competence.

The TCC began as a demonstration program in the summer of 1984. It now operates in five-month cycles and began its first full cycle in August 1985 with 106 corpsmembers. After a three-week training academy operated by the National Guard, the program's first cycle operated out of two residential sites located on state lands.

The TCC has some features that are common to other conservation corps and some that are unique. Like many other conservation corps, it has the following characteristics:

- Youth work a 40-hour week in crews with a supervisor and are paid minimum wage.
- Work involves park improvements and includes construction.
- Youth participate in a mandatory, unpaid education program.
- The program operates with strict rules and discipline; no alcohol, drugs or weapons are allowed. Learning to follow orders is a key feature.
- The work performed provides public benefits through improvements to public lands and buildings.

Features that distinguish the TCC from many other corps include the following:

- The program is based on a strong private/public partnership. Approximately 40 percent of TCC funds are raised from the private sector and are used primarily to pay corpsmember wages; the remaining funds come from local (40 percent) and state (20 percent) JTPA funds. Private sector representatives also help direct the program through representation on the advisory board and its subcommittees.

- The program specifically targets disadvantaged youth who are JTPA-eligible.

- The program places major emphasis on job placement.

- The program operates with the active involvement of several organizations. These include:

  - The program's host organization, the Texas Education Foundation;

  - The Governor's Office;

  - The National Guard, which runs the training academy;

  - Texas Parks and Wildlife, a state agency which provides the residential sites and is the primary work sponsor;

  - Service Delivery Areas (SDAs), which are primarily responsible for recruiting participants and certifying their eligibility;

  - Local community colleges that are given contracts to provide educational services;

  - The Texas Employment Commission, which assists in placing corpsmembers in jobs; and

  - The many representatives of business and industry who provide financial support to the program and potential employment for the corpsmembers.

- The program is the only state-wide conservation corps run by a non-profit agency.

This profile describes the TCC structure, operations and results during its first full cycle. It presents the strengths displayed by the program, as well as issues that were addressed as the program moved from the planning and design phase to implementation. Special attention is paid to the program's distinguishing features and its early successes. Other issues such as attrition, staffing problems and the need to learn how to coordinate and manage a decentralized program are also discussed. The information presented here is based on six days of site observations and interviews and a review of program documents and materials.

The remainder of this profile is organized as follows:

- Chapter II describes the context, history and start-up of the program;
- Chapter III presents the program's organization and structure;
- Chapter IV describes the program in action;
- Chapter V describes the corpsmembers during the first cycle;
- Chapter VI presents conclusions, observations and lessons that emerged from the TCC program design and start-up.

II. CONTEXT, HISTORY AND START-UP

This section presents the background of TCC beginnings, its early history and some lessons learned from the summer demonstration of 1984.

ORIGINS

The TCC was created in the Texas Governor's Office as a model youth program to deal with youth unemployment. The Office of Special Youth Programs was looking for ways to reduce the 50 percent unemployment rate among minority youth in Texas. The obstacles to employment faced by these youth included a lack of basic skills, discipline, motivation, employment record or simple access to jobs -- particularly jobs in the private sector. With Governor Mark White's encouragement, a model was designed based on three successful programs: the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s, which constructed many of the state parks and facilities in Texas 50 years ago; the Outward Bound school of the 1960s; and the California Conservation Corps, which is the largest and most firmly established of the current youth conservation and service corps.

The proposal for a Texas Conservation Corps was first presented to the state Legislature in 1982. The original proposal came from the Texas Department of Community Affairs (TDCA) Children and Youth Services Division as a response to legislation in 1981 charging the TDCA with responsibility to coordinate programs for young people. The original goal included a dual focus on "learning basic and fundamental work ethics, the value of a day's work for a day's wages" and conservation, rehabilitation and improvement of the state's natural and cultural resources. The latter focus was less emphasized in the TCC ultimately established.

The original concept called for a state program, funded largely from state revenues, to support 1,500 youth at minimum wage in summer projects that would be conducted by local governments under contract to TDCA. The program actually started with more modest and probably more realistic proportions, and now -- with adminstration by an independent non-profit organization and substantial funding by the private sector -- is a more appropriate "fit" to the Texas ideology and culture.

Early on, the TCC concept included strong participation from the private sector -- as funders, advisors and future employers. Consequently, the program came to reflect some business concerns as well as the concerns of a conservative administration. There was substantial resistance to supporting conservation-oriented job programs with state funds. More appealing was an employability-oriented program that would demonstrate a basic understanding of the American work ethic, be funded with federal

dollars rather than state money, reduce unemployment and train a pool of workers.

The program began as a special program in the Governor's Office of Planning/Exemplary Programs for Youth. In addition to the governor, Gene Binder, Director of Exemplary Programs for Youth, was a project champion. In the opinion of many who were interviewed, Binder had a genius for marketing the program to the private sector. He solicited support with a "bottom line" appeal, one which promised the private sector a "return on investment." The TCC asked each of 55 businesses to make a $20,000 tax deductible investment for a total contribution of $1.1 million to supplement federal funds.

Further, to induce businesses to hire TCC graduates, a combination of Targeted Jobs Tax Credits and wage reimbursements were pledged. In addition to financial incentives, the appeal promoted the following benefits to employers:

- Low risk employees with sound work habits;
- Savings in interviewing, screening and related overhead costs;
- Opportunities for affirmative action;
- Public recognition for investing in Texas youth;
- Assistance with vouchering for tax credits;
- Help for creating a new generation of taxpayers;
- Access to a statewide recruitment system; and
- Recognition as a sponsor in promotional materials.

All of these benefits were cited in promotional appeals long before the first cycle began.

Unlike many other youth conservation and service corps, the TCC's primary objective is not to produce useful work or community service, provide improvement to public lands or instill the service ethic. From the program designers' and managers' perspective, conservation and productive work on public lands may provide an opportunity to improve public space, but the setting is less important than the opportunity to enhance the employability of corpsmembers. The assumption of program designers and managers is that TCC graduates can be placed in jobs because the program will demonstrate that participants have shown the attributes necessary to be good employees. (For the primary work

sponsor, Texas Parks and Wildlife, productive work is the primary goal.)

THE 1984 DEMONSTRATION

The TCC began as a nine-week residential demonstration in the summer of 1984. It enrolled 100 low-income participants and was designed to be funded in part by participating Service Delivery Areas using JTPA Title IIB funds.

SDAs recruited, selected and referred participants, and contracted with the TCC to train them. Approximately three-fifths of the funds for the summer demonstration were provided by the state from special projects and state JTPA set-asides.

In addition to the SDAs, Texas Parks and Wildlife provided work projects and supervised work crews, and the Texas National Guard conducted training. The Governor's Office also asked Central Texas College to administer the pilot Texas Conservation Corps program.

According to interviews with staff and early planners, Texas Parks and Wildlife was originally a reluctant partner because of negative experiences with youth employment and training programs. Consequently, it was unwilling to house crews during the demonstration at Island State Park, where most of the corpsmembers would work. Housing needs were met by persuading the private sector to contribute house trailers used during the boom in oil exploration. They were placed on the mainland near the Island State Park ferry. This is but one example of how the private sector responded to calls from TCC staff to meet planned and unplanned needs as the program unfolded.

According to reports prepared by TCC staff, youth completed the summer demonstration program, "learning the benefit of hard work, teamwork, self-confidence and a sense of accomplishment." The reports also said that the state gained more than $400,000 in improvements to Texas parklands during the eight-week program, obtaining three dollars in work for each dollar invested by the Department of Parks and Wildlife. As a result, the department became an advocate of the program, and many park directors requested TCC work crews.

The major lesson learned from the summer pilot experience, according to TCC documents and interviews with program staff, was that the program could work. They became convinced that Texas would receive significant returns from a year-round program, businesses would gain access to a pool of trained entry-level workers, and young adults could become employable with new skills and positive work attitudes.

POST-DEMONSTRATION DEVELOPMENTS

While the summer program was considered to be a success by participating agencies and individuals, the program briefly lost momentum because staff in the Governor's Office had other priorities. After several months, program designers became convinced it was no longer appropriate, feasible or necessary for the program to be operated out of the Governor's Office, which viewed its role as catalyst and program developer, rather than program operator. Nor would it be logistically feasible for the program to be part of a state agency. In a state agency, corpsmembers would be considered state employees and, as such, could not be provided meals, a serious problem given the residential nature of the program. And since a major appeal to the private sector was that financial contributions to the program would be tax deductible, a suitable type of administrative entity had to be identified.

After three months of considering a variety of options, an appropriate administrative entity was found in the Texas Education Foundation, a private non-profit organization that has successfully administered the Job Corps for many years. This became the official administrative organization for the program, functioning largely as a pass-through for funds. The TCC actually operates as a separate, autonomous project with its own advisory board.

The summer experience also led to the following conclusions and decisions:

- First, plans for the beginning of the year-round program would be scaled down. Some early plans envisioned large numbers of corpsmembers, work sites and projects. After the demonstration, projections of 1,500 were changed to 500 and, ultimately, to 400 for the first year, with goals of 150 for the first cycle and 250 for the second cycle. The original planners were not experienced program operators, and it became clearer that start-up, program planning, recruitment and fund-raising would be more time-consuming tasks than originally contemplated.

- Second, program managers saw the need to take greater control of the program than they had during the summer demonstration. In particular, they had to deal with the issue of crew supervisors' crucial role in the corps. During the summer demonstration, Department of Parks and Wildlife staff had supervised work crews. TCC managers felt that a more coherent program would

result, and clearer lines of authority would prevail, if crew supervisors were TCC staff and directly accountable to the TCC. This decision was affirmed for the year-round program. However, the Department of Parks and Wildlife was given veto power over the hiring of crew supervisors in order to ensure that supervisors' technical skills met the department's requirements and that the quality of work would be maintained. One implication of this decision was that some supervisors who had strong skills and experience in working with youth did not meet the department's approval, and some compromise staffing decisions had to be made.

III. PROGRAM ORGANIZATION, STRUCTURE AND FUNDING

The newly constituted year-round Texas Conservation Corps was officially created by executive order on August 9, 1985. This section describes the program framework, the roles and responsibilities of participating organizations, staffing and funding.

The executive order followed an earlier memorandum of agreement signed April 30, 1985, by the Office of the Governor, the Texas Education Foundation and the Advisory Board of the Texas Conservation Corps. That agreement was non-financial in nature, but established the framework, roles and responsibilities for the various parties in "this unique private/public partnership."

The memorandum of agreement described the corps as a Governor's Model Youth Program designed to serve economically disadvantaged youth between the ages of 18 and 21. It stipulated that program responsibilities were dependent on the availability of funding from various sources: 40 percent from the private sector, 40 percent from the SDA's JTPA funds; and 20 percent from Texas Education Agency funds (state-level JTPA funds). The original estimate was that $2.6 million would be needed to serve 500 youth. The agreement did not impose limitations on seeking other sources of funding, but did stipulate that if funds were not obtained or committed in sufficient amounts to operate the program successfully, the agreement would be null and void. The agreement was to be in effect for one year, after which it could be renewed.

The program was organized into two five-month cycles per year, designed to serve between 125-250 youth in each cycle, at a total cost of approximately $5,200 per participant. The month between each cycle would give staff time to assess the program and plan for the next cycle. The stated goal of the program was to prepare youth for jobs and to place participants in private sector employment.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS

The memorandum of agreement provided a blueprint for the organizational structure of the permanent year-round program and laid out the roles and responsibilities of each participating organization. Similar to the division of labor in the summer demonstration, they were as follows:

- Primary responsibility for overall design and policy development and for marshalling and coordinating resources rested with the Governor's Office. Other activities included fund-raising and soliciting commitments from participating

organizations and agencies. The Governor's Office also reserved the right to approve subcontracts for work sites, operations at the academy, the education component and housing arrangements.

- The operating agency (in practice the core staff and director) was responsible for the following:

  - Designing and implementing a training program that teaches good work habits and techniques for finding and keeping a job;

  - Designing and implementing an educational component that identifies the learning deficiencies of participants, offers remediation and assesses gains;

  - Providing food and lodging, with a portion of costs charged to participants;

  - Recruiting participants from the SDAs, encouraging them to contract with TCC as a training and job program for eligible youth, and complying with reporting requirements of the SDAs;

  - Supervising youth at the residential sites and the work sites;

  - Making every effort, before program completion and within 60 days after, to place participants in private sector jobs or in other training programs to further develop the knowledge and skills required for productive employment in Texas;

  - Providing reports or briefings monthly to the Governor's Office and consulting with that office on major program policy issues;

  - Accepting all contributions made to the TCC and agreeing to hold, manage, expend and invest such funds with income earned from such investment to be used to increase the level or quality of direct services.

- The advisory board, appointed by the governor, consisted of 21 representatives from the private and public sectors including 10 representatives of major Texas industries, representatives of five agencies that participate or cooperate with

the corps, and six other organizations. The board was to meet quarterly to advise and consult with the director and staff of TCC on program and policy issues. It was also to assist in raising funds and placing participants in private sector jobs. The advisory board works with staff in four subcommittees: curriculum, evaluation, placement and fund-raising.

- The Texas Employment Commission (TEC) provided initial funds for the planning and pre-operational phase of the program, assistance in recruiting and placing participants, and office space for TCC administrators.

- The Texas Education Agency (TEA) was to provide funds for the operation of the Training Academy and some funding for the TCC educational component. The role of the National Guard in training was not specified in the memorandum of agreement.

- The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department was to provide work projects, technical supervision, equipment and materials, and housing.

Although not specified in the memorandum, community colleges also participate in the TCC program. Colleges located near each of the residential sites provide testing and instruction to corpsmembers as part of the TCC's informal educational component.

TCC ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING

The TCC has a central administrative office in Austin and three residential sites for corpsmembers. During the first cycle there were two residential sites: one at Bastrop State Park, about 35 miles east of Austin, and the other at Sheldon Wildlife Preserve, about 30 miles northeast of Houston. For the second cycle, a third residential site was added at Mineral Wells State Park outside Fort Worth. Each residential site houses several work crews which are dispersed to different work sites in that region.

The central office has a core staff that operates out of program headquarters in the Texas Employment Commission building near the State Capitol. Core staff manage the program and coordinate the work and educational components for each of the residential sites. Site staff are located at each residential site. During the three-week training academy the staff is supplemented by National Guard members, who help run the academy.

Core staff are as follows:

- The TCC Director, Doug Duke, is a lawyer who was on the governor's staff specializing in employment and training issues. Mr. Duke has overall responsibility for the program, oversees the staff and is the primary liaison with the governor's office, the advisory board, the private sector and the large network in which the TCC is involved.

- The program director, Dr. Gloria Paige, has major responsibility for program components, including the educational component, both for the academy and the program itself. She supervises recruiting, job development and job placement. She works with the curriculum and placement committees of the advisory board, the community colleges that provide educational services, the Association of Private Industry Councils that approve competencies for the educational program, the Department of Parks and Wildlife and the site managers. She also determines, with the director of operations, whether or not the work projects fulfill the training needs of participants.

- The director of field operations, Modesto Gloria, is responsible for physical and logistical operations and works with Texas Parks and Wildlife staff and work supervisors to coordinate work projects.

- A consultant, Jake Johnson, is responsible for procuring supplies and equipment such as vans, kitchen utensils and furnishings.

- Three support staff work in the central TCC office.

The staff configuration at each site is as follows:

- A site manager, hired by the director and core staff, oversees all activities at the site and reports to the central office; he/she is the local site leader and sets the tone of the site.

- An assistant site manager is hired by the site manager.

- Three residential counselors, hired by each site manager, rotate two shifts at the residential site to provide supervision during non-work hours, including weekends.

- Work supervisors direct a crew of about 10 corpsmembers at the work site and coordinate with Parks and Wildlife local staff. Work supervisors do not live at the sites, but work a nine-hour day, five days a week. They have technical skills and some experience supervising or teaching youth. They are hired by core staff with the approval of the Department of Parks and Wildlife, which monitors supervisors' technical skills. Some are National Guardmembers who participated in the training academy and were subsequently hired as supervisors. In the first cycle, all work supervisors were male.

- A corpsmember aide who had been enrolled in the summer program was hired for each site. The role of the corpsmember aide is varied. He/she assists crew supervisors and site office staff with clerical work, errands and other tasks.

Supplementing TCC staff, teachers from the community college provide instruction, and staff of the National Guard conduct training. An organizational chart showing the relationship of the various staff members is in Appendix A.

FUNDING AND COSTS

A special feature of the TCC, quite different from similar programs, is the way in which the program is funded and costs are allocated. The use of dollars from different funding sources has influenced the content of the program and the way in which some program components have been defined (e.g., the curriculum for the academy, the education program and the definition of staff as trainers).

As it is now constituted (additional funding sources may be obtained in the future), the program is funded from federal JTPA dollars and private donations. The budget is based on $5,200 in direct costs-per-participant. (This is the amount the corps cites when calculating charges to funders.)

The first funding source is local service delivery areas (SDAs). They are allocated slots in the program and asked to contract with TCC to provide $2,500 for tuition per participant, using JTPA Title IIA funds for training and employment services. These are not performance-based contracts.

Local JTPA dollars are not used for the training academy, since it is anticipated that a substantial proportion of attrition will occur during the academy. This arrangement was made as an inducement to SDA participation, since it reduces the likelihood that SDAs will have to report many negative terminations. Only

when the applicant has completed the academy does he/she enroll as a corpsmember and become a participant chargeable to the local SDA. A further inducement to SDAs is that TCC youth will attain PIC-approved competencies, which are included in the curriculum during the academy and early in the on-site educational program.

The local JTPA-funded tuition is used for supervisor and staff training; education of corpsmembers, including community college tuition; work clothes and boots; transportation; and the TCC's portion of room and board for corpsmembers.

In the event of a negative termination, the TCC reimburses the SDA for the unused portion of the room and board. The SDA and the TCC signed an agreement outlining mutual roles and responsibilities. (See Appendices B and C.)

The second funding source is the private sector. Private donations pay corpsmembers minimum wage for a 40-hour work week. The fund-raising goal (based on a program serving 500 youth a year) was $1.1 million. The goal was lowered to $650,000 as both fund-raising and program expectations became more realistic. As of November 1985, about $400,000 was committed or received in varying amounts from 16 corporations. Private donations, which are tax deductible, are also used for public relations activities and advisory board meeting expenses.

The third funding source is the Texas Education Agency, which administers state JTPA funds. It provides $1,100 per participant. These funds do not require performance measures and are used for the academy and for some of the program's administrative and educational costs.

For 1986, TCC planning was based on a budget of $1,593,744. A copy of the budget and revenue sources is shown in Appendix D.

In addition to direct costs, there are a number of in-kind contributions to the TCC program. These include: the space provided by the Texas Employment Commission for the central office and core staff; the design of work projects and supervision provided by the Department of Parks and Wildlife, which also provides materials for the work projects; some costs of the academy that are absorbed by the National Guard; the cost of space at residential sites provided by the Department of Parks and Wildlife; and the professional time contributed by staff of the Governor's Office and members of the advisory board to project development.

IV. THE PROGRAM IN ACTION

The basic components of the TCC program are the following: the training academy, the program at the sites, the work program, the formal educational program, other youth development activities and job placement efforts. In this section of the profile, each of these components is described.

THE TRAINING ACADEMY

Once candidates have been accepted by the TCC, their first experience is at the academy.

In the first cycle, 106 "cadets" began the academy at Camp Mabry in Austin. The three-week program was conducted by the National Guard and TCC staff members. The cadets (also referred to as students) were supervised by guardsmen, lived in barracks, wore uniforms, learned to march military style and, in the words of a corpsmember, learned to "shape up."

Students were awakened at 5:00 AM and began their day with physical training, followed by breakfast and an inspection. They spent the remainder of the day in classes and participated in organized sports most evenings. During the final week, students also worked at Camp Swift, an outdoor wilderness site.

Students were tested in basic skills and aptitudes, enabling them to be placed in classes according to their abilities. The formal curriculum included classes in the world of work, problem-solving and decision-making; training in the use of hand tools; fundamentals of leadership, conservation and environment; employability development planning, health education, reading, math, English as a Second Language, equipment maintenance and repair, and first aid.

The major thrust of the academy was its para-militaristic training of recruits to obey strict rules and follow orders. It was very rigorous, and at times TCC staff and the National Guard staff disagreed on some goals and procedures. For example, the Guard insisted that all male students get short haircuts. Although TCC staff acknowledged the benefit of strict rules, they were less rigid. The TCC did not want to dismiss corpsmembers for not getting haircuts. They preferred a more gradual and persuasive approach to discipline.

Students did not expect the strictness, rigor and discipline they encountered and not all stayed; 84 of the 106 youth completed the academy. This attrition rate (16%) is comparable to that of the California Conservation Corps, which runs about 15 percent to 20 percent but can be as high as 25 percent. For those who remained, the academy accomplished its mission. Despite the

rigor, some felt it was the best part of the program. "It really straightened me out; I had to change my attitude" was a typical comment. One woman stated, "Don't get me wrong. I have some complaints. This is not what I expected. But I never thought I would be getting up at 5 AM, doing PT, and I'm proud of myself. I wouldn't quit now for anything. I've come too far."

In the second cycle, the training academy was modified and the National Guard was less involved. Two core staff members, the director of operations and the program director coordinated the academy with the assistance of two guardsmen and the TCC staff, all of whom had been part of the first academy. This arrangement enabled the TCC to exercise more control over the philosophy and conduct of the academy.

THE PROGRAM AT THE SITES

After the academy, corpsmembers and staff were assigned to one of two residential campsites for the remaining four months of the program. Both sites were in isolated locations; corpsmembers were not assigned to sites in their hometown area in an effort to teach them self-reliance and independence and lessen their exposure to negative influences in their neighborhoods. During the work week, a 10:30 P.M. curfew was imposed, and on weekends, corpsmembers were permitted to leave. Most traveled home despite the long distances.

The two sites are physically quite different from each other. Bastrop is a Spartan facility located in a wooded state park with many recreational facilities and campsites built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. It is used by the public in the summer. Corpsmembers were housed in large cabins and campsites that accommodated between 10 and 15 persons. The cabins, which were being repaired and painted by the TCC as a work project during the first cycle, were plain and bare, with cots, lockers and a TV. Showers and bathroom facilities were in a separate bathhouse. A laundry shed was also being built by a TCC crew. A separate dining hall housed the site offices. A work crew of seven corpsmembers served as permanent kitchen staff under the supervision of a kitchen work supervisor who instructed the crew in all aspects of restaurant work and management. Other corpsmembers helped with kitchen work on a rotating basis.

In contrast, Sheldon Wildlife Reserve, about 45 minutes from Houston, is wilderness and marshlands. Trailers housed 7 to 10 corpsmembers each with a small kitchenette and bathroom. Two trailers had laundry facilities, and another was used as an office and meeting center. There was no dining hall; corpsmembers ate in a dining hall of the local community college where they attended evening classes. These arrangements were temporary. Two of the crews were rehabilitating and reconstruct-

ing cabins and a dining hall near the site that will ultimately serve as permanent quarters for the TCC.

The management and tone of the two sites also differed. Bastrop was managed by a sergeant from the National Guard who hired other guardsmen as supervisors and counselors. The site was operated in a highly organized, disciplined manner. Many features of the academy, including PT in the morning, were retained. Corpsmembers had little input.

At the Sheldon site, the original manager was a social worker who was more youth-oriented. The residential counselors at that site did more counseling and participated in more activities, and youth were given more responsibility and independence. The site manager's style was laissez-faire. Physical training in the morning was left to other staff to conduct, was discontinued due to wetness and rain, and was never reinstituted. The manager placed little emphasis on her administrative and management responsibilities. As a result, she was asked to resign two-thirds of the way into the cycle. She was replaced by the assistant site manager, who had increased assistance from core staff.

The day's schedule at both sites included a full day of work and classes two-to-four evenings a week, depending on the need for completing curriculum requirements. On evenings and weekends, when classes were not held, few other activities were available. There seemed to be a gap in the TCC programming in this area.

The Work Program

For the first cycle, all the work projects were sponsored by the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife. Under its leadership, housing at both camps was rehabilitated and other work projects were taking place. At both sites, crews of 10-12 corpsmembers and a supervisor worked in two locations. One group worked at the home camp, improving housing facilities, or -- in the case of Bastrop -- other camp facilities. Other crews traveled about one- and one-half hours roundtrip to a work site each day. Those sites were Lockhardt State Park in the Austin area and Battleship Texas in the Houston area.

Corpsmembers worked on several projects that required a variety of skills. At Bastrop, the projects included constructing a storage building, concrete golf cart paths, a two-car garage and a two- and one-half mile fire lane; renovating a maintenance building, four cabins and a mess hall; and managing the mess hall.

At Sheldon, corpsmembers renovated passageways, compartments and a trophy room on the Battleship Texas; constructed a metal shed with a concrete floor; and, at a fish hatchery, renovated cabins

to be used for TCC offices, a mess hall and dormitories for corpsmembers. Other projects at other locations were planned, including construction of a state park, landscaping and erosion control, and weatherization of low-income housing.

In each case, with the exception of operating the mess hall, a Parks and Wildlife supervisor designed the projects, ordered materials and provided technical direction and quality control. The projects were coordinated by the TCC director of operations and the Department of Parks and Wildlife. The TCC supervisors directed corspmembers in their daily work.

Crews at the observed work sites were actively at work and supervisors were present, rotating to the different work stations and offering comments. The projects required hard physical work and similar tasks were being done by both males and females. Several corpsmembers who explained what they had been doing reflected a fair amount of acquired knowledge and apparent pride in their accomplishments.

Department of Parks and Wildlife supervisors as well as TCC work supervisors expressed satisfaction with the work that had been accomplished by the fourth month of the cycle. They also commented on the improved efficiency and skill of corpsmembers since the beginning of the program.

Weather conditions, delays in the arrival of materials and some staffing problems caused setbacks. Attrition during the program at the residential sites was greater than expected and resulted in a smaller than anticipated workforce delaying the completion of tasks.

The Formal Educational Program

As with the work program, there were similarities and differences in the educational programs at the two sites.

All corpsmembers were required to participate in 4-to-6 hours of classes per week. These were conducted in the evenings by local community colleges. At Sheldon, classes were held at the college site; at Bastrop, instructors conducted classes in the main camp building.

The curriculum included some components in which all corpsmembers participated, and some that differed because of varying educational levels. (Forty percent of all corpsmembers who enrolled and 60 percent of those who completed the training academy already had a high school diploma; some had also accumulated college credit.) All corpsmembers studied occupational knowledge and consumer economics, including PIC-approved pre-employment competencies. Other options were developmental studies, pre-GED, GED and a college credit course in construction skills. In

Austin, a certificate rather than college credit was given. Six corpsmembers from the first cycle completed their GEDs while they were in the program; 20 received either a certificate or college credit. This is an impressive accomplishment in such a short time.

Corpsmembers' attitude toward the classes was reflected by their dress and decorum. A strongly held norm evolved. After work, corpsmembers showered and dressed, often in fancy clothes, before going to class. This occurred despite the fact that even at the college site, the classes were self contained and conducted just for corpsmembers. Going to class was an accepted part of the program and offered opportunities for diversity in the day.

Other Youth Development Activities

The entire conduct of the program -- at residential sites, at work and at class -- can be viewed as youth development. Supervision, stress on following rules and the rigid schedule are all intended to promote good work habits and responsibility. This was emphasized even further in the mid-cycle implementation of a Contingency Management System for corpsmembers: a reward system based on points earned for progress on the job, in the classroom, at living quarters and on supervised trips. The system was introduced to the TCC on a trial basis by the program director, whose background includes training in behavioral psychology. The system places a heavy burden on staff. Each day supervisors, teachers and residential counselors must assign points to corpsmembers in his/her charge.

The two residential sites varied in the way they carried out general youth development activities. Much youth development is informal -- a result of staff/corpsmember relationships, and the ambience and culture of the sites. These differed markedly during the first cycle.

Job Placement

A major feature of the TCC is its emphasis on finding private-sector jobs for graduates. One of the responsibilities of the program director is to develop strategies for job placement.

Among the job-placement strategies planned or implemented by mid-November 1985 were the following:

- Corpsmembers were asked to fill out forms stating their job preferences and the city in which they would like to work. A letter was sent with the form to the appropriate local office of the Texas Employment Commission.

- Board members and contributors were asked to hire some corpsmembers and were shown the financial benefits of doing so.

- A person from the Texas Employment Commission was assigned as liaison with the TCC to help find jobs for corpsmembers.

- Leads on specific job openings were pursued; in one example this resulted in the hiring of three corpsmembers by Ramada Inn.

Other strategies being considered included the following:

- Using Civilian Conservation Corps alumni in recruiting jobs;

- Conducting a job fair; and

- Teaching corpsmembers to find housing, plan a budget, select furniture, etc.

As of five weeks before the end of the program cycle, four corpsmembers had found jobs, including one as a TCC corpsmember aide. In addition, some members were said to have left because they were offered jobs back home.

Thirty days after the first cycle ended, the TCC reported that 30 of the 58 graduates had been placed or had found jobs, surpassing the 50 percent goal set for this period.

V. CORPSMEMBER CHARACTERISTICS AND ATTRITION

TCC corpsmembers are, by definition, economically disadvantaged. To be admitted to the program they must be eligible for JTPA assistance. The only other requirements are that they be aged 18-21 and not on probation or parole. Recruitment and eligibility certification is conducted by local SDAs.

For the first cycle, the program hoped to recruit 150 participants, but fell short of this goal -- partly because the program started late and partly because so much of the recruitment was left in the hands of staff of the SDAs, not all of whom were sold on the program. Of the 106 youth who attended the academy, about 80 percent were black, 20 percent Hispanic. Only a few white males joined the program. About 20 percent of the corpsmembers were female. Of those who began the academy, 89 completed it. Those who left said they did so because of problems at home, acceptance in vocational programs closer to home or because they found the program too demanding.

Slightly more than half the corpsmembers were high school graduates. Some of the corpsmembers were taking college classes, and some had left other jobs because the TCC offered better opportunities. Some had been in other training programs but had not found jobs. A few were waiting to begin military service. Some wanted to try "something different" and some, particularly the females, wanted to be on their own away from home.

It was assumed that a significant number of corpsmembers would not withstand the rigor of the academy and would leave the program; 17 of 106 did. A higher dropout rate occurred during the course of the actual program. Of the 89 who began working at the sites -- 60 at Bastrop and 29 at Sheldon -- 58 graduated. Most of the corpsmembers who left did so voluntarily, but seven were fired on one day for breaching the rule against using alcohol.

Conversations with corpsmembers reflected some dissatisfaction, but most were quite pleased with themselves and their accomplishments, and felt they had gained self-confidence. Many expressed interest in applying for jobs as TCC corpsmembers aides.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE TCC EXPERIENCE

TCC views the first cycle, rather than the summer program, as the best test of its operation. Staff discovered that a five-month cycle operating in two sites was sufficiently different and presented new problems to be addressed. However, there were important accomplishments. Some are listed below:

1. The TCC raised a substantial number of private sector dollars and creatively used JTPA funds and other funding sources. However, the use of JTPA funds placed some constraints on program design: certain elements were included in the academy that might more appropriately be taught later in the cycle (e.g., some pre-employment competencies), and participants were limited to those eligible under JTPA guidelines. The TCC is considering seeking additional sources of funding in the future in order to diversify its recruiting.

2. The academy program successfully established strict discipline and structure, weeding out about 16 percent of those who started. It prepared the corpsmembers for their site experiences and helped train staff. It also became a source of additional staff, since several National Guardsmen were later hired as site staff.

3. At the sites, TCC corpsmembers completed some impressive work projects: so impressive, in fact, that park directors around the state have asked for work crews and have become TCC advocates. Supervisors from the Department of Parks and Wildlife expressed satisfaction with the progress made by crews, though they acknowledged that the corpsmembers were unskilled and needed coaching. They also noted that corpsmembers' skills improved during the course of work projects.

4. The education component, often the weakest link in youth programs, appeared to be operating smoothly and successfully. The training academy prepared corpsmembers for classroom work. Corpsmembers were responsive in the classes and appeared motivated. Classroom experiences provided diversity in an isolated setting, with little to distract the corpsmembers; the curriculum offered a mix of basic skills and pre-employment skills which the corpsmembers found relevant.

Despite the relative success of the formal education components, the TCC director is re-thinking the arrangement with community colleges and is considering using corps-hired instructors in the future to give the corps more control over education.

5. The TCC works well with its constituent organizations and groups. It uses its advisory board as a working board, capitalizing on the human resources available in that group.

6. The TCC emphasizes job placement. It directs attention and resources toward this goal, even helping corpsmembers relocate if necessary.

A list of some of the problems observed and lessons learned in the first cycle follows:

1. The corps recruited fewer members and lost more of them through attrition than expected. Thus the program did not meet all its training and production goals, which were based on a higher estimated corpsmember strength. This problem could be solved with a modified form of rolling entry or by integrating new crews in overlapping cycles. Some of the reasons for attrition should be examined and strategies to deal with them designed.

2. Some unfortunate staffing decisions were made and staff were assigned to sites with minimal preparation and guidance from core staff. As one result, a site manager failed to meet program expectations, and a work supervisor, assistant site manager and corpsmember aide left during the cycle. Some of these problems could be averted through a more coherent and better articulated staff development and training program. Other problems require more coordination and communication among core and site staff. This is particularly crucial in a decentralized training effort.

3. There was a lack of definition and, therefore, of consistency in how the program moves corpsmembers toward independence and personal responsibility. The two TCC sites differed markedly in this regard, reflecting a lack of agreement or articulation of this issue. The TCC director expressed interest in a more gradual transition from the rigor of the academy to greater freedom at the

sites. But even at the site level, corpsmembers can gradually be given more independence and personal responsibility. But the TCC must monitor each site to ensure consistency in this regard.

4. The program's first cycle was generally weak in recreation and enrichment activities, including organized sports. There were opportunities for youth development and enrichment that were lost by not capitalizing on the free time built into a residential experience.

5. Some of the TCC's constituent groups disagreed on program goals and priorities. For example, the advisory board as a whole is more oriented to placing youth in jobs, while the staff is primarily interested in broader youth development goals. Some board members view programs like conservation awareness or wilderness experience as frills, rather than as opportunities to learn survival skills that would build confidence and make youth more employable. Similarly, the Department of Parks and Wildlife is more concerned with completing the work projects than with youth development. Difficulty in reaching consensus necessitates mutual education and negotiation.

The TCC experience provides some evidence of the feasibility of targeted youth corps programs and indicates that a public/private partnership can be forged successfully in a youth corps program. The TCC has made great strides as it moves to operate a third site in a second cycle. It proceeds with deservedly high hopes and realistic expectations based on its early experience.

APPENDICES

A. Organization Chart

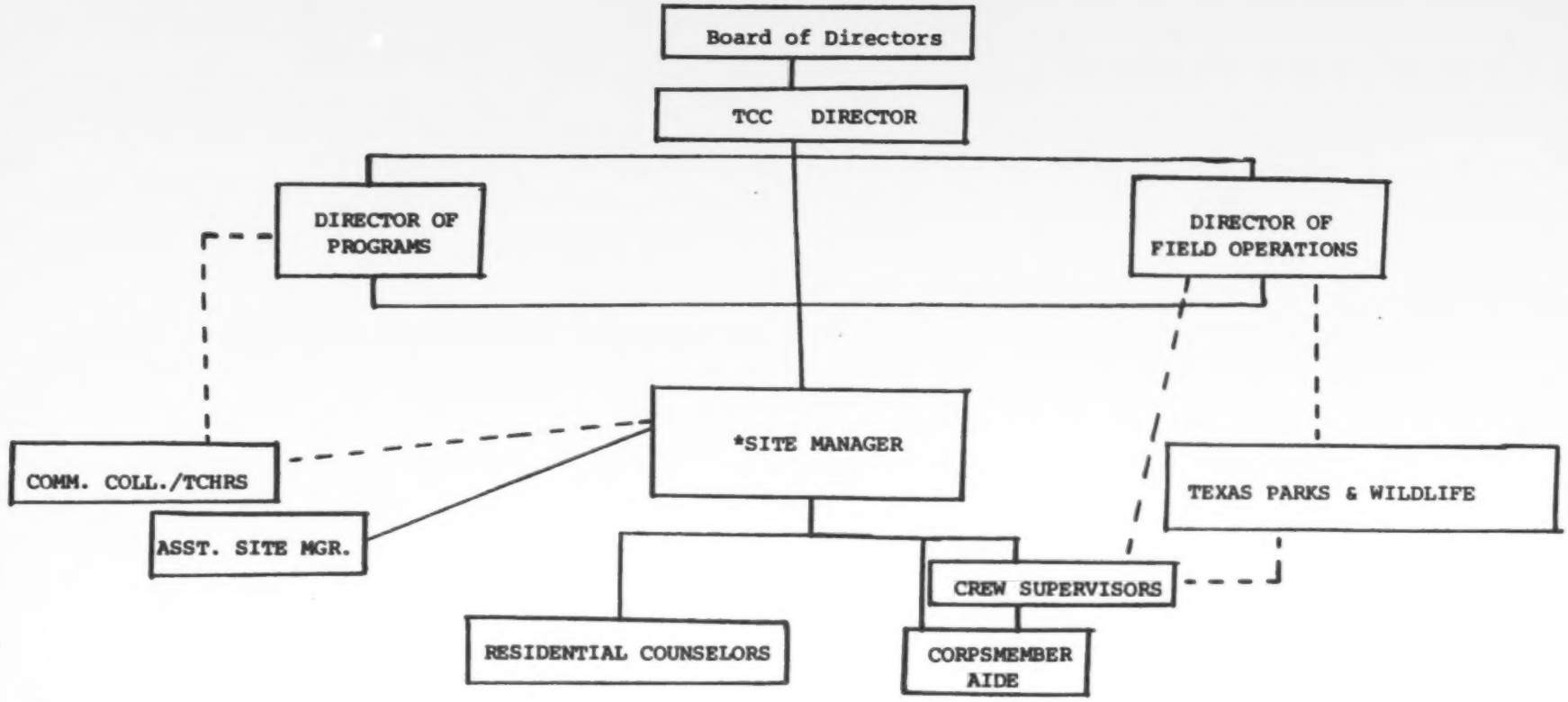
B. Texas Conservation Corps Agreement for Training and Service

C. Memorandum of Agreement

D. Texas Conservation Corps 1986 Budget

Appendix A

ORGANIZATION CHART



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*The staffing arrangement under the Site Manager level is the same for each of the residential sites.

Appendix B

TEXAS CONSERVATION CORPS

AGREEMENT FOR TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT SERVIC

BETWEEN

THE ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY FOR THE _____ _____ J.T.P.A. SDA	and	THE TEXAS EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION ADMINISTRATOR OF THE TEXAS CONSERVATION CORPS A GOVERNORS MODEL YOUTH PROGRAM

The above named Service Delivery Area (SDA) and the TEXAS EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION mutually agree to perform the following services for eligible youth to be enrolled in the TEXAS CONSERVATION CORPS.

It is understood and agreed that this is a residential based work/education program designed to provide remediation in basic education skills, teach young people how to work, and provide pre-employment and world of work training. The participants will attend an Academy for the first 3 to 4 weeks, where they will be pre-tested in aptitude and skills, receive leadership training, job safety and basic vocational training, first-aid instruction and basic education courses.

There is no charge to the SDA for the Academy. Only when an applicant has completed the Academy will he/she be enrolled as a Corpsmember and become a participant chargeable to your SDA. Upon completion of the Academy, Corpsmembers will be assigned to worksites, where they will work a 40 hour week, learning skills as they work, and attend classes in the evening. During this period of the program, Corpsmembers will receive a portion of their room and board, and a work allowance equivilant to minimum wage. The only cost chargeable to the SDA is the training and education, the portion of the room and board which TCC furnishes, and the work clothes, boots, transportation. The work allowance paid to the participants is paid from non-JTPA funds.

Service Delivery Area agrees to do the following:

1. Recruit and select program participants (with assistance from TCC staff if requested).

2. Certify JTPA eligibility of participants. Accept responsibility for expenses incurred on behalf of a student admitted to the program who is later determined to be ineligible for JTPA services.

3. Submit to the Texas Educational Foundation a copy of JTPA application and eligibility forms.

4. Assume reporting responsibility to the Texas Department of Community Affairs.

5. Assist the TCC in placement of the participants.

THE TEXAS EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION agrees to do the following:

1. Maintain time and attendance requirements and other records required by the SDA Administrative Entity and/or JTPA and regulations.

2. Provide a monthly progress report on each participant to the SDA.

3. Provide transportation for each participant from home to the academy, from the academy to the worksite, and from the worksite to home upon termination of the program.

4. Provide the participant with:

   a. Room and board (upon completion of the Academy, participant will pay $6 a day toward their room and board cost).

   b. Pre and post program testing in academic and career awareness skills.

   c. A minimum of four hours a week classroom instruction in World of Work skills training and/or Basic Skills Education training.

   d. Forty hours per week work training and a work allowance equal to the minimum wage for hours worked.

   e. Work clothes, tools, books and supplies as necessary.

   f. Evening and weekend activities to include enrichment, cultural awareness, social, and recreational activities.

5. Provide the SDA with documentation of attainment of compentency.

6. Provide the SDA with documentation of termination, whether positive or negative, and the reasons therefor.

7. Take primary responsibility for placement of the participants upon completion of the program.

In the event that a participant is negatively terminated from the program, TCC shall reimburse the SDA for the unused portion of the room and board from the date of termination to the scheduled termination date of the program.

In signing this agreement, the SDA administrative entity agrees to pay to the TEXAS EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION a total of $2,500 tuition for each participant enrolled from the SDA. This amount is due and payable on or before thirty (30) days from invoice.

The TEXAS EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION agrees to deliver the program services described as part of this agreement and to comply with all relevant sections of the Job Training Partnership Act and regulations.

Each party reserves the right to terminate this agreement if respective roles and responsibilities as set forth in this document are not met. It is understood that prior notice and opportunities for corrective action with an acceptable frame would be given in this event.

DATED_____

SIGNATURES

_____
TEXAS EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION, INC.

_____
AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE
SDA ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY

Appendix C

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

This Agreement is made on the 30th day of April, 1985, between the Office of the Governor, the Texas Educational Foundation, a non-profit corporation, hereinafter referred to as Administrative Entity, and the Advisory Board of the Texas Conservation Corps.

The purpose of this agreement is to provide the framework for operating the Texas Conservation Corps, a Governor's Model Youth program designed to serve economically disadvantaged youth between the ages of 18-21. The Corps is a residential based program which provides work experience, wages, remediation in basic education skills, while teaching the value of hard work, dedication, teamwork, self-discipline, punctuality, and other good work habits and attitudes required for success in private sector jobs.

This agreement is non-financial in nature, but will set forth the roles and responsibilities of the various parties to this unique private/public partnership. It is understood that all responsibilities set forth herein are dependent upon the availability of funding from the various sources set forth here-in.

It is anticipated that the initial operational funding for the TCC shall be from the following sources:

-- private sector funds approximately 40%

-- JPTA Service Delivery Area funds approximately 40%

-- Texas Education Agency funds approximately 20%

The enumeration of these funding sources is not in any way to impose limitation on using other sources, and all the parties hereto

agree to cooperate in identifying other funding, such as contracting with other governmental entities, seeking other state and/or federal funds for operation of the TCC.

There shall be two five-month cycles per year designed to serve between 125 and 250 participants at a total cost of approximately $5,200 per participant.

The first thirty days of each cycle shall be a training academy which shall provide program orientation, basic skills training, and a remedial education component. Following the academy, the Corps members shall be assigned to residential work sites for a period of approximately four months under the terms of a contract to be executed between the Administrative Entity and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The goal of the program is to place the participants in private sector employment.

ROLE OF THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

The Governor's Office shall have primary responsibility for the overall design and policy development of the program. Because the TCC is a Governor's Model Program which is still in the developmental phase, the Governor's Office reserves the right oversee and monitor performance and to provide policy direction to the Administrative Entity. The Administrative Entity shall provide written reports and/or briefing to the Governor's Office at least monthly on the performance of the program.

The Governor's Office agrees to use its best efforts to marshal and coordinate the resources necessary to operate the program successfully. Without infringing on the perogative and authority of each

agency involved to contract, procure services, and expend funds, The Governor's Office shall facilitate and assist the Administrative Entity in contracting for start-up funds from the Texas Employment Commission, education and academy funds from the Texas Education Agency, and the SDAs. The Governor's Office further agrees to promote this Private/Public partnership through assisting in private sector fund raising for the TCC.

Any subcontracts for worksites, operation of the academy, the education component, and housing of participants shall be subject to the approval of the Governor's Office prior to their execution.

ROLE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY

The Administrative Entity shall have the responsibility and authority for implementing the program. It shall provide reports and/or briefings monthly to the Governor's Office on the performance of the program and shall consult with the Governor's Office on major policy issues concerning the overall design of the program.

The Administrative Entity shall be responsible for designing and for implementing an educational component, which shall identify the learning deficiencies of the participants, offer remediation, and assess the gains made by each participant. It shall design and implement a training program which will teach good work habits, how to find and keep a job, and shall use every effort to accomplish the major goal of the program--place the participants in private sector jobs or in other training programs to further develop the knowledge and skills required for productive employment in the Texas economy.

The Administrative Entity shall provide food and lodging for the participants for the duration of the program, a portion of the cost thereof to be charged back to the participants.

The Administrative Entity shall have primary responsibility, with assistance and support from the Governor's Office, for the recruitment of participants from the SDAs, and shall comply with all reporting requirements of the SDAs.

The Administrative Entity agrees to accept all contributions made to or on behalf of the TCC, and to hold, manage, invest, and expend such funds in accordance with the wishes of the donors and in support of the TCC. Any income earned from the investment of such funds shall be used to increase the level and/or quality of direct services to TCC participants. Upon termination of this agreement (or any renewal or extension thereof), the Administrative Entity agrees to transfer any remaining TCC fund to its successor. In the event the program is terminated, the Administrative Entity agrees to turn over any remaining funds to the Treasury of the State of Texas, to be used for purposes which are consistent with the intent of the donors who have contributed to the TCC project.

THE ROLE OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

The Advisory Board of the TCC shall be appointed by the Governor and shall consist of representatives of the private and public sector. The Vice-Chair of the Advisory Board shall be a representative of the Governor's Office.

The Board shall advise and consult with the Director of the TCC on program and policy issues affecting the program, and shall have primary responsibility, with assistance from the Governor's Office, for raising private sector funds to support the TCC.

The Advisory Board will work directly with the Director of TCC in marketing the program to the private sector, and assisting in placement of the participants in private sector jobs.

The Advisory Board shall make recommendations to the Administrative Entity, the State Job Training Coordinating Council, and the Governor on ways to improve the program.

THE ROLE OF THE STATE AGENCIES

Although this is a non-financial agreement, it is anticipated that the following state agencies will provide the following:

The Texas Employment Commission will provide the initial funds to pay for start-up costs to be incurred in the planning and pre-operational phase of the program. In addition to the start-up funding, TEC will provide assistance in recruiting and placement of the participants.

The Texas Education Agency will provide funds for the operation of the academy and a portion of the funds for the on site educational component of the program.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will provide work sites for the participants, worksite supervisors, equipment and materials for such work.

The Texas Department of Community Affairs shall provide technical assistance and be responsible for arranging an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the program.

DURATION AND TERMINATION OF AGREEMENT

In the event that private sector funds and/or SDA participants (and contracts) are not obtained or committed, in sufficient numbers to successfully operate the program as designed, prior to July 15, 1985, this agreement shall become null and void.

Otherwise, this agreement shall remain in full force and effect until July 15, 1986, at which time it may be renewed upon the mutual agreement of the parties hereto.

Executed this 30th day of April, 1985.

Bob McFarlin

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

William D. Rogers

ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY

TCC ADVISORY BOARD

Appendix D

TEXAS CONSERVATION CORPS
1986 BUDGET

I. Central Administration		
A. Salaries		
Director	$ 40,500.00	
Director Field Operations	26,667.00	
Director Programs	28,334.00	
Business Service Office	23,000.00	
Secretaries	29,116.00	
Accounting Clerks	12,000.00	
P/T Temp	8,000.00	
	$167,617.00	
B. Benefits	21,330.00	
C. Materials and Supplies		
Office Supplies	12,000.00	
Travel	17,656.00	
L.D. & Postage	3,600.00	
Duplication	10,200.00	
Miscellaneous	3,500.00	
Insurance	6,000.00	
	$ 52,956.00	
TOTAL CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION		$ 241,903.00
II. ACADEMY (150)		
A. Salaries		
Camp Managers (3)	$ 12,000.00	
Supervisors (12)	41,280.00	
Res. Couns. (9)	21,600.00	
Asst. Managers (3)	9,000.00	
Dir. Fld Oper.	5,333.00	
Dir. Programs	5,666.00	
P/T Temp	4,000.00	
Counsultants	35,000.00	
Secretary	2,399.00	
	$136,278.00	

II.	ACAD. Cont...		
	B. Fringe Benefits	$ 28,191.00	
	C. Materials & Serv.		
	Room and Board		
	Recruits	$ 31,500.00	
	Staff	6,090.00	
	Transportation	18,000.00	
	Training Materials	3,076.00	
	Clothing	60,300.00	
		$118,966.00	
	D. C/M Stipends	31,500.00	
	E. Indirect	17,239.00	
	F. Medical	7,000.00	
	G. W/C & Hosp. Insurance	10,245.00	
		$ 65,984.00	
	TOTAL ACADEMY		$ 349,419.00
III.	WORK SITES		
	A. Salaries		
	Camp Managers	60,000.00	
	Asst. Managers	45,000.00	
	Work Supervisors	206,400.00	
	Crew Leaders	62,280.00	
	Cooks	79,200.00	
	Res. Couns.	108,000.00	
		$560,880.00	
	B. C/M Wages	214,400.00	
	C. Fringe	103,016.00	
	D. Materials and Serv.		
	Room and Board	112,000.00	
	Recreation	6,000.00	
	Medical Supplies & Ins.	10,000.00	
	W/C Ins.	30,430.00	
	Educational Material	8,000.00	
	Transportation	40,000.00	
	Operating Supplies	12,000.00	
		$218,430.00	
	E. Indirect	52,094.00	
		$270,524.00	

Texas Conservation Corps
1986 Budget

TOTAL WORK SITE COSTS		$1,148,820.00
Less Charges to C/M		
Room and Board	$ 134,400.00	
Uniforms	12,000.00	
	$ (146,400.00)	
NET WORK SITE COST		1,002,420.00

SUMMARY OF COSTS

Central Administration	$ 241,903.00	
Academy	349,419.00	
Work Site	1,002,420.00	
		$1,593,742.00

REVENUE SOURCES

Public/Private Foundations	$ 10,000.00
State Agencies	349,419.00
Local SDAs	600,000.00
Private Sector	634,325.00
	$1,593,744.00